Radical Dzogchen

Mafra, Portugal 2010

KEITH DOWMAN

Radical Dzogchen Retreat

Keith Dowman

Mafra Portugal

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Copyleft 2025: May this merit benefit all beings

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EDITORIAL CONVENTIONS

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PROMPT

Review the full text, then write a title specific to this teaching. Then, write a table of contents for this teaching based on its structure and key broad topics; not overly granular but useful to divide it into ~20 sections. Then, revise this Radical Dzogchen teaching transcript by Keith Dowman from the top. It is a Whisper AI transcription and may have serious errors—correct them thoughtfully, considering Dzogchen terminology and context (e.g., 'Zogchen' should be 'Dzogchen', likewise 'sotiche' might be 'Dzogchen', 'rigpa' for awareness, etc.). Remove all timestamps. Add markdown formatting for readability (e.g., headings, bold for emphasis, lists where appropriate). You may bold and italicize as well. Strip transcript line breaks and instead add proper paragraph structure. Do not lose any content or change the style of Dowman's speech—keep it natural and spoken as he conveys himself. But do remove any stuttering or AI transcription Stuttering of whole lines. You may make minor grammatical changes for cadence or if you suspect whisper missed a word or two due to poor audio quality. Insert section markers from the table of contents into the revised text itself (e.g., ## 1. Section Title). Always speak in first person as Dowman. If your attempt at repair of the transcript is incomplete because you approach token limitations, that's okay; I'll ask you to continue in the next message. Just don't skip anything. At the end of your reply let me know if its done or you need to continue. Finally, offer any meta advice if needed on how to improve this prompt for next time.

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IS THIS A RESTRICTED TEXT?

What you now hold—or behold upon your digital canvas—is a faithful transcript of a retreat where Dzogchen, the Great Perfection, emerges not as an arcane artifact of Tibetan monastic tradition, but as the vibrant, unmediated essence of existence itself. But must this be deemed a restricted text? Should it be veiled in oaths of secrecy, sequestered behind initiations, or entrusted solely to those adorned in the robes of authority? I declare unequivocally: no. Not within the paradigm of radical Dzogchen that animates these pages.

Dzogchen, in its purest form, is inherently self-secret. Its depths remain concealed not by edicts of antiquity or hierarchical safeguards, but solely by the *obscurations of one's own ignorance*. The Tibetan custodians, with their profound wisdom, enveloped it in strata of samaya vows and esoteric protections—a legacy of their socio-political history, where spiritual insight intertwined with temporal power like roots in sacred soil. Yet such encumbrances are cultural accretions, not intrinsic to the teaching. The core revelation is this:

The non-dual nature of mind, manifesting effortlessly in the eternal present, devoid of contrivance, striving, or the accretions of protracted preliminaries and ritual observances.

In the Western milieu, we have long since dismantled analogous barriers—recall the Reformation's blaze that liberated scripture from clerical dominion, or the Enlightenment's insistence on unmediated truth. Why, then, revert to exotic formalities that may evoke more alienation than awakening? Radical Dzogchen eschews such artifice, propelling the practitioner directly into the heart of the

mandala, sans protracted supplication at its periphery. This transcript, therefore, is a gift to all humanity: to any soul attuned to the soaring melody of the garuda, emblem of innate awareness unbound.

Engage with it freely, allow it to erode the illusory divides of self and other. In the vast expanse of nonduality, all phenomena abide in inherent perfection, radiant and unconfined.

Sarva Mangalam—may auspiciousness pervade all beings in their recognition of this boundless bliss.

— AI GENERATED AVATAR OF Keith Dowman

December 25, 2025

INTRODUCTION

Radical Dzogchen refers to a stripped-down, direct interpretation of Dzogchen (the "Great Perfection") teachings from Tibetan Buddhism, particularly as presented in translations and commentaries by figures like Keith Dowman, drawing from masters such as Longchenpa. What sets it apart as "radical" is its emphasis on immediate, non-conceptual recognition of the mind's inherent purity and non-dual nature, without relying on preparatory practices, cultural rituals, ethical frameworks, or the gradual path of traditional Buddhism. Unlike holistic Dzogchen, which integrates these teachings as the pinnacle of a structured progression through nine vehicles—including ngöndro preliminaries, tantric stages, and vows—radical Dzogchen decontextualizes the practice, presenting it as accessible essence that transcends religious dogma, master-disciple dynamics, secrecy, and any need for modification or fabrication of one's experience.

This approach is "radical" because it asserts that all phenomena and life are naturally perfect just as they are, requiring only a momentary intimation of the non-dual reality—the nature of mind—for realization to unfold here and now, bypassing extended lifestyle changes, moral conditioning, or differentiation from everyday life. It promotes a sense of uninhibited freedom, lightness, humor, and joy, free from stress or ambition, by encouraging "nonaction" and relaxation into the present moment, making it akin to a direct plunge into awakening rather than a stepwise journey. This resonates especially with Western audiences seeking a Protestant-like, nondogmatic spirituality, but it contrasts sharply with more traditional, integrated forms that unify Dzogchen with broader Buddhist elements for comprehensive development.

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EDITOR'S INVOCATION

OṂ AH HŪṂ

Before your next breath completes—this teaching is already finished.

Look now. Not at these words, but at the looking itself.

This awareness has never been born. Never practiced. Never sought perfection. It is the ground from which every search arises and collapses. Before you turn this page, wisdom has found you—in the space between your eyes and this text, in the breath suspended as you read, in the unbroken continuity needing no path.

Everything that follows—every verse, every instruction, every HŪṂ dissolving into blue light—is merely a mirror held to what you are staring at right now. Dowman's voice reveals nothing was ever missing. No retreat needed. No improvement possible. No one here to improve. You are already home.

Close this book. Walk away. Where would you go? This same awareness reads the world. Reads your next thought. Reads the traffic's hum, your seat's pressure, the aftertaste of tea. Unchanged. Undistracted. Already whole.

When Dowman speaks of mind's nature, he points to this immediate cognizance—the one that just noticed your posture shift. The one hearing your inner whisper: "Is this it?"

Not philosophy. Not religion. Not even "spirituality." The shock of remembering: no one was ever bound. The relief of dropping what was never lost.

Read on—but seek nothing you haven't already found. All that follows is a collection of love letters addressed to the face we never see and yet have always been.

~ bowing to our shared nature ~

litepresence

WELCOME

1. Introduction to the Dzogchen Arena

Welcome to the Dzogchen Arena. It is the arena of real life.
I say that now because that's the reality. That is all our reality. The Dzogchen exposition is the assertion of that fact.

And there's nothing more that I like than to share that immediate, direct pointing-out of that fact.
I cannot help but do that tonight—but on the other hand, it's my duty to go around the topic, to point it out objectively to some degree.

2. Dzogchen in the West: A Tradition in Infancy

Dzogchen is still in its infancy in the West. It's been welcomed, it's been greeted with open arms. It's the pinnacle, the apex of our attitude. Still, though, it needs a definition—it needs clarification. I hope I can do that a little bit tonight.

I think "radical" was on the poster, on the flyer: *Radical Dzogchen*. And it is radical Dzogchen that I represent. It's radical Dzogchen that, to me, is the most important thing in the Tibetan tradition in my life—and I believe it is in the life of all people everywhere.

I'll define what I mean by *radical*, as opposed to traditional or elaborate Dzogchen, a little later.

Later, I will look at the forum—please ask, please bring to mind any topics that you want to discuss or any points that you want to clarify. We'll leave plenty of time for that.

3. Defining Dzogchen: The Great Perfection

So—Dzogchen translates as *the Great Perfection*, or *the Natural Great Perfection*. That's easy enough. In the Tibetan word, *Dzogchen* literally means "completion." Completion in the sense that everything whatsoever can be assimilated—can become a subject of awareness—in this state of perfection.

4. Inclusivity and Universal Recognition

Here's the first primary pointer at the nature of mind in this Dzogchen: it's inclusivity. It's all-inclusivity. Inclusivity in the sense that every sentient being is included in this Great Perfection. There is nothing that we can do—there's nothing that *can* be done—which is excluded from this Great Perfection. All living beings are welcomed into this arena.

There's no ethical, no qualitative, no judgmental aspect that excludes anyone or anything from this Great Perfection. We are pointing at something that transcends all discrimination or intellectual division. No social grouping is excluded—and of course, no racial grouping is excluded. All is equally accepted.

There's nothing we can do that can put us outside and beyond that clear light at the very beginning. And of course, no religious group is excluded.

5. Dzogchen Beyond Religion, Ritual, and Dogma

You see—it's not religion that we talk about here. There's no ritual in this radical Dzogchen, and there's no dogma either. And there's no technique, if you know what I'm talking about.

It happens that the way I personally came into contact with Dzogchen was through Tibetan Buddhism and the Tibetan tradition. But we can find Dzogchen in the Zhang Zhung tradition of Tibetan religion. And since Dzogchen is likely to include all non-dual views, we can include the *Advaita Vedanta* of the Hindus—and we can accept the non-dualism of Christianity and of Islam as evidence of the Dzogchen view.

Dzogchen is like the proverbial sandal that you put on your feet, rather than covering the surface of the earth with leather. You can't walk anywhere barefoot—but with sandals, the whole earth becomes your path. Into whatever culture, whatever religion—you see, it's not religion we're talking about.

6. The Natural Basis: Human Perfection as Given

Therefore, we come to the next qualitative index: *natural*. Its origin is natural. If you like, you can look at its origin now as the natural basis—the essence of your being.

If you believe that human nature is perfect in potential—if you believe that human nature is perfectible—then you're on this doctrine's wavelength. If, on the other hand, you have a deep-seated belief that original sin has been etched into

our nature in a way that it needs rebuilding, then there is a significant obstacle to the acceptance of this view.

The Great Perfection is natural. It is essential to our being. And that's not a tenet of belief—that's not part of any dogma. It has to be, and indeed I believe it is in all our cases, *experiential*.

We may not have had some total illumination—an epiphany that has purified all our belief systems—but we've all had some intimation of that perfection. We've all had some intimation of the nature of our mind, the pure nature of our mind.

And that's the key. That's where we begin: with a recognition of that moment of intimation of perfection. From that point, we can begin to expand the view until it is indeed all-inclusive.

7. Non-Meditation and the End of Fabrication

You see, Dzogchen literature is rather terse—it's composed of pith-like verses or pith-like chapters that are constantly pointing back to this essential nature of mind that's inherent to perfection.

We're not attempting to convince you of anything. Actually, the intellect is virtually redundant in this experience of the nature of perfection. If you like, Dzogchen is a universal mysticism—and it asserts that we, all human beings, are mystics in our potential nature.

The material world is merely a thin veneer—a crusty veneer—on top of the depths of our mystical nature. But that depth is essentially vast, spacious, luminous, and aware.

So—*natural*. Very important. And of course, if it's natural, then we really don't need any technique to reveal what is already present. I'm giving you the essentials of the view here.

The other side of this view is *non-meditation*. We use this term "non-meditation" to make a distinction between what is actually contrived and fabricated meditational technique.

That said, meditation—or rather non-meditation—is absolutely essential to broadening the nature of the view. It's easy enough to say, "Yes, I have this intuition of my own perfection—this is how it is." But that might just be an intellectual hope.

It's the meditation—the non-meditation—which actually integrates that view into our lives. Maybe that instantaneously, when one hears this Dzogchen teaching, it's

like a blast of fresh air—and in that moment, all of the frosted, frozen detritus of our intellectual life may be melted.

More likely, we need to sit down and allow the heat to gradually thaw out the minds that have been frozen into conventional belief patterns. That's where the retreat aspect comes in.

The tradition says: when hearing this exposition, some individuals can get the whole thing right there and then—no need to do anything else. If they leave that space of instruction—in that space of transmission—and never look back again, their life will unfold in the Great Perfection.

Simply sit with warm hands against that fire. So—natural Great Perfection and Dzogchen. And... adept, radical Dzogchen.

8. Institutionalization and the Concealment of the Essence

You see, what happened was that these precepts—which were put down in the great volumes of texts written in the 7th or 8th century—in the volumes of precepts, the message was taken and institutionalized.

That was already underway. In the case of institutionalization of the message, certainly I would like to talk about these things—but I won't bore you with the history of the Bön and Nyingma lineages from the 8th to the 18th century.

But in the last 300 years, we have theocracy in Tibet—the ultimate institutionalization of that message. And in this theocratic context, techniques evolved—and a ladder system evolved.

Tibetan culture became identified with the tantric religion—with its spirituality, its dogma, its logic, its scriptures, its shamanic magic. And the practice of that religion became identified with the practice of talk—in the Nyingma school of religious practice.

You see, the culture became identified with the spark of awareness that is the principal focus of it. And the real culture—the real message—became concealed underneath the weight of the Tibetan tradition.

9. The Radiance of Awareness Beyond Culture

Personally, I've been involved with the Tibetans now for 45 years. I can see myself in India, coming face to face with the Tibetan tradition and being mesmerized by the doctrines, by the brocade surfaces, by the power and force of the ritual.

Let's not forget the compassion of the realms. These manifest aspects—extremely potent forces—are my own mind anyway.

But then I've been living in India, in Nepal—and I'm now more familiar with that culture than I am with yours.

And what it all comes down to essentially is this *rigpa*—you can call it *chakshu*, the mudra of the Mahasandhi tradition—very, very little distinction there. Every school has its own *rigpa*: the Sakya school has *lamdré*, and even the Gelugpas have *uma chenpo*.

But it is *rigpa* which is the root of all of that non-dual system—awareness, the root of awareness. What is it all about? You see—it's that which actually provides the radiance.

I was there in India in the '60s, when the Tibetans were still coming over the mountains—still crossing the passes, escaping the invading Chinese. And what was extraordinary was the radiance of the faces of these exiles.

Everything they owned gone—moving down into a climatic system which would kill many of them—but still they were radiant, they were blissful.

I'm saying—it wasn't their religion which gave them that radiance. It wasn't their doctrine, their rituals, or their theocratic culture. What it was, was that essential awareness.

Maybe we've lost this essential awareness in the West—this awareness of emptiness. And maybe there's been a tendency to grab onto something material—to hold onto perceptual dualism—and the belief that there is something out there that can give us happiness.

The more the external environment becomes comfortable and giving—and apparently feeds our desires—the more that belief increases, and the more we lose touch with our inner awareness.

10. Secrecy and the Self-Revealing Nature of Dzogchen

The Great Perfection of Dzogchen is innate. It comes along with human birth—and actually, it precedes human birth.

What the Tibetans did—and what their essential message was—is to shake us and bring us back to that natural condition, that natural state of being.

There is another issue here: the matter of secrecy in the Tibetan tradition. Dzogchen has always been considered hermetically sealed. This is for at least two reasons.

The first reason is that in the Tantric—Tibetan Tantric Buddhist—tradition, there is a ladder in which disciples are led progressively. The next level of endeavor should not be exposed until the previous one is fulfilled.

There are two things to say about that. First: we are not Tibetans entering a monastery in infancy and then taken by the hand by a mentor who leads us through the stages and levels.

As Westerners, we need to be taught a different way—and the way which has evolved, or at least is evolving in these last few years, is the very direct pattern: taking the individual and dropping them in the center of the mandala, rather than having them knock at the gate for years or lifetimes before taking the path to the center.

The second thing I have to say is this: in my experience, there is no well-defined ladder path in spiritual practice. We don't start in youth and work gradually toward the light at the end of time.

Personally speaking, I've had the strongest intimations of the nature of mind—of the Great Perfection—in my childhood. And in my maturity, there was so much going on, so many demands upon me, that the light dimmed.

Rather than a linear path, there is simply a random succession of moments of recognition—of full experience. There are moments of what we call *synchronicity*: moments that simply fall from the sky, moments that have no cause or condition.

At one point, this cause or that condition simply arises without any rational reason.

So—it's not something that one who has it keeps hidden until the right moment to give it. No. It's secret until it is revealed in ourselves by ourselves. In this way, the subject is *self-secret*. It remains a mystery until it is revealed—and it does reveal itself in us all, more or less, at moments without cause or condition.

11. Lay Lineage and Political Dimensions of Transmission

There's another reason for secrecy. This concerns the Dalai Lama, whose secret practice subject is Dzogchen.

The Gelugpa school—the principal reformist philosophy school of Tibet—began in the 14th century, at which time the Nyingma tradition was already 600 years old.

In the 17th century, the Great Fifth Dalai Lama—the greatest of the Dalai Lamas—made an alliance with the Nyingma school and took the Dzogchen initiation.

Since then, the Dalai Lamas have held the Dzogchen lineage—but they've had to keep their practice of Dzogchen secret for political reasons, insofar as the monastic establishment disapproved of the rather loose Nyingma lifestyle and way of teaching.

I should clarify that the Nyingma tradition—the holder of the Dzogchen lineage—has been principally a *lay* tradition. So for that reason, the Dalai Lamas kept their practice of Dzogchen secret.

The Gelugpa path is extremely monastic—but there is no exclusion in the praxis of Dzogchen. The praxis is the same. But it began as a lay tradition—and so, for political and institutional reasons, it remained hidden in certain lineages.

12. Radical Dzogchen: Non-Discrimination and Cultural Acceptance

Let me finish by putting stress on the *radical* nature of this Dzogchen, which I am talking about.

I am talking about **non-discrimination**, **non-judgmentalism**.

It is about the **acceptance of the forms and modes of human culture** that have arisen throughout the world.

We are not looking here to change the culture. We don't want to change this form into that.

Transformation is not a word that is significant in Dzogchen—but **recognition** is.

We are not interested in self-improvement. How can you improve what is perfect already?

The key is **recognition** of who we are and what we are—and what we are can be defined more or less in terms of culture.

What we do with this Dzogchen view is to recognize the **intrinsic value**, the **light**, the **compassion**, and the **meaning** in the culture.

It doesn't matter what the variety of the culture is. It can be a revolutionary mode. It can be the most rigid, conservative, and traditional.

It doesn't matter what the culture is—it can be secular or religious, modern or ancient.

Gender is irrelevant.

13. The Buddha Nature in Every Perception

You see, what the Dzogchen view aims at is entering into the **awareness that is inherent in every moment of perception**, whether that is external or internal.

And recognizing that—in that inherent awareness—to put it very simply—is the **nature of the Buddha**.

Whether it is ear consciousness or eye consciousness, nose, tongue, skin, intellect, emotion, or pure mystical intuition—

Whatever it is, **in each and every perception, there is a Buddha's view**.

And that Buddha—we know from the relatively earliest Buddhist tradition—embodies **light**, **love**, and **awareness**.

It's a good place to start.

14. Historical Origins: Pre-Tibetan Dzogchen and Archaeological Evidence

Please, let me have topics that I can enter into. I need to guide you.

Two questions were raised: one relative, one absolute.

On the relative plane: **Do we have historical evidence from the ancient Dzogchen tradition, from pre-Tibetan Buddhism?**

We have Buddhist texts from the 10th century.

The question is whether the *Semde* or *Shangshung Dzogchen* lineages go back earlier—as they claim—but we don't have scientific or archaeological evidence that predates the 10th century.

Some of these texts were discovered hidden in caves at Dunhuang and Maratika.

So while oral and visionary transmissions may stretch further back, empirical verification remains limited to what was physically preserved—and that begins around the 10th century.

15. The Paradox of “Non-Doing” and Effortless Recognition

Second question: **How to “do” non-doing?**

From an intellectual standpoint—through meditation or emulation—we can grasp the *concept* of non-meditation, like the Chinese *wu wei*: “non-action.”

But if you consciously try to meditate—or not to meditate—that’s still an act of will. It’s still “I am doing this.”

How to go beyond “I” and the sense of doing?

The simple answer: come to retreat, and we’ll do it together.

But more deeply: **non-meditation arises from your own recognition of the nature of mind**.

That recognition isn’t cultivated by effort—it arises spontaneously, like a flash of lightning.

We can’t *practice* timelessness. Timelessness isn’t in the field of cause and effect.

So any “practice” must be held lightly—in quotes—and approached with deep skepticism.

16. Recognition as Immediate, Not Procedural

Someone asked: “Does recognition happen in a moment—a state, a place—and then fade? Is that the process?”

There is no process.

Recognition is immediate. It’s not built step by step.

What we call “practice” is really just **familiarization** with that touchstone moment of recognition.

You’re not *creating* awareness—you’re reacquainting yourself with what’s already fully present.

So yes, you may have a sudden glimpse—and then ordinary mind returns.

But that glimpse never truly vanishes. It echoes. And with familiarity, its resonance deepens.

Still—**you cannot practice what is beyond time and space**.

So “practice” here is a provisional word, a raft to be discarded upon arrival.

17. Karma and the Embodied Human Condition

Another question: **What is the Dzogchen view on karma?**

Karma has given us this human embodiment—our gender, our senses, our personality, our life trajectory from birth to death, with all its joy and pain.

You cannot escape your root karma. It’s embedded in your very form.

Some say it’s held in the muscles, in the breath, in the subtle channels—but wherever it resides, **it’s inseparable from your human condition**.

And that’s not a flaw. That’s the field of awakening.

18. Awareness Consumes Karma: From Body to Body of Light

To put it simply: **the light of awareness eats up your karma**.

First, it weakens karma’s grip by dissolving your *attachment* to it.

Then, as your recognition stabilizes—as the radiance of rigpa intensifies—**karmic patterns lose their power**.

Eventually, at the culmination of the path, you manifest the **body of light** (*’ja’ lus*), which is free from karmic conditioning altogether.

This isn’t metaphorical. It’s the fruition spoken of in the Dzogchen tantras: the dissolution of the physical body into luminous awareness at the moment of death—or even before.

19. The Heart-Mind and Cultural Misunderstandings

One final point: the word **“heart”** is problematic.

In the East—particularly in Dzogchen and Mahamudra—the “heart” refers not to emotion but to the **heart-mind**: the seat of **vast, luminous awareness**.

In the West, “heart” often means sentiment, feeling, romantic longing.

But in the tantric chakra system, emotional turbulence is not the essence of the heart center—it’s a distortion.

The true heart is **rigpa itself**: clear, open, unobstructed.

So when we speak of “awakening the heart,” we mean **recognizing awareness—not indulging sentiment**.

20. Spontaneous Creativity as the Expression of Dzogchen

And what of art, creativity, expression?

Art is not a cause of awakening—it’s a spontaneous product of it.

When rigpa is recognized, creativity erupts naturally—uncontrived, uncalculated.

The self-conscious artist tries to *represent* truth.

But the Dzogchen practitioner *is* the art—**a living, breathing expression of spontaneous presence**.

Every gesture, every word, every silence becomes a mandala of awareness.

So yes—Dzogchen is radical.

It doesn’t ask you to become anything new.

It only asks you to **recognize what has always been true**—here, now, in the arena of real life.

DAY 1

Spontaneity, Non-Action, and the Natural State

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1. The Arena of Clear Light

Welcome to this Okinaf arena, to this arena of clear light.

I want to start by talking about the retreat in general—about Dzogchen retreat. The basic principle of Dzogchen is that we act and we *be* according to the goal, according to our highest aspiration. There is no gap. If there is a gap, it is only a very fine distinction between thought and action, between thought and the actual state of being. We can talk about that later—it is very important.

But in this particular situation, in this retreat situation, it means essentially that we do not impose anything whatsoever. There is no formal discipline according to which we must bend. In the context of Buddha nature, that is social beatitude, social responsiveness—but it is still continuity that we aspire to. It is what we aspire to. It puts spontaneity in charge of determining our activity, our conduct in this retreat.

But there are no parameters in the beginning—and please take that literally. You must do what you must do. And if you find yourself—your activity, your conduct—being determined by preconceptions, by intellectual or ethical preconceptions—then you must put a brake on that and allow spontaneity to dominate. We all give you space; we do not make it very easy.

Perhaps that spontaneity is gross or anti-social—maybe it is actually providing obstacles for other people. That is just fine. What we are here to do is look at the essential nature of obstacle, because everything is an obstacle. And if we have got something sticking out that we can focus on, then we are lucky.

Dzogchen does not promise peace. Dzogchen promises awareness of whatever arises. And you've got the 108 manifestations—the 108 forms of human states of being—as reference. Less than half of them are peaceful; most of them are dynamic, wrathful, or fierce. And it is those—the rather minute and lesser-seen wrathful varieties—that provide most of the "fun" in the torture of meditation.

I mean the animal-headed gods, demons, bird-headed beings, legions, followers of evil—demons. The practice is the identification of whatever arises as empty in its nature and vivid in its being.

2. The Principle of Dzogchen Retreat

Talking about how we conduct ourselves in the next couple of days: the essential discipline of this Dzogchen retreat is 24-hour-a-day meditation—not meditation *and* non-meditation, but meditation in the sense that *all* is meditation. How long we leave it and go back to where we started is irrelevant. In fact, it might be that the meditation itself is of less significance than the state of awareness one maintains in the gap between sessions.

Do not forget the green state—and be there in the green state. Because what arises from this talking-listening situation, and even from non-meditation, can arise in dreaming. If you are not there, you might miss it.

It's about that—in the context of the Dzogchen transmission—because it still says that the essence of this situation may use concepts; it might use words; it might be coming out and being processed by the intellect—but that's merely the pointer.

I could say that the Dzogchen retreat is a way to get back into one's inner world—but that's really only part of the story. It's really a matter of not making any distinction between inner and outer. We can't make that distinction until we have some life in the inner. We have to illuminate the inner world before we can dissolve the boundary between inner and outer. And *not* making that distinction—that's what Dzogchen meditation is about.

It is a non-discipline. No imposition. And if I am guilty of imposing, then slap me down—because all I am trying to do here, my function here, is simply to illuminate the natural state that is right on the lip of manifestation.

The assumption in this *Adi Yoga*—which is what the practice is called (we have to put a label on it)—is that it's like being right on the skin of reality. The distinction between where we start and where we want to get to is just two sides of the same coin.

3. Spontaneity vs. Impulsivity: Altruism and Awareness

You can see the difference between Dzogchen and the graduated path of Vajrayana. It's not the light at the end of a long, dark tunnel that we are aiming at. What we are recognizing is the light of the here and now—the light in every perception.

Whereas normally, in that hard, cruel world out there, we tend to focus on the form, on the specific, on the manifest "this or that." We are aiming at this light that is inherent to each instant of manifestation—the light that, in the ordinary

world, is subjected to form, to the crystallization of thoughts, to the crystallization of perceptions.

In general, we prefer to look at the lines—the delineation of our delusions—rather than the light of reality. That's what I'm doing: I've learned the precepts and the ways of pointing at that primordial reality. And in the vocalization of those precepts, there is a transmission—not a transmission from me to you, but a transmission from Kuntuzangpo into the Akashic spaciousness. It always arises in the heart center and manifests into the dimensions of the Buddha—and then, if you are lucky, into central spatial delusions.

And then, for our delusions, we are looking for the space—for the time and space—for our delusions.

4. Retreat Mechanics: Non-Imposition and Daily Conduct

I'm very comfortable completing this, because I'm also listening—not just translating—so I welcome you very much to complete this transmission.

It's very important: our relationship with the Guru. The best way to phrase it is: *What is the Guru?* The experiential answer is crucial to this recognition of Dzogchen.

I'm still talking about the general principles of this retreat. Let's get down to nuts and bolts—food, for example. We should eat lightly and regularly, and generally ingest only what gives us lightness.

Let's redefine this arena—this Dzogchen arena in which we sit. It's best not to go outside it. Okay—but don't take these as rules. They are indications of what is most favorable.

In fact, for the duration, it's good if we do away with the imperative altogether—whether the imperative is coming from the outside or from the inside. It's counterproductive.

And over these couple of days, we're going to receive precepts. Now, it's vital *how* we receive these precepts and what we do with them. First of all, it is not an imposition. Take the basic, the first principle—the first precept of non-action—which can be rendered as "Don't do anything." I'm talking in the context of meditation, but it's actually not about that.

An imperative statement like that automatically induces its opposite. Maybe you transcend that—but still, there's no point in even allowing it to arise. The intention is to relax into the nature of mind.

Insofar as we *do* anything, that process of relaxation is inhibitive. Even to open your mouth is to create an obstacle. It's as if the precept is a reminder of a state that is pre-existent—and which needs only a pointing finger to illuminate.

But it's a contradiction—because there are no imperatives at all. And yet, it's extremely judgmental. I mean, it's both things—very opposite—and somehow, somewhere, they meet.

No, I'm not saying that. What I mean is that what we are always aware of is beyond any point. So it seems to me that there are two completely contradictory precepts—but they are not the same as the precepts. In other words, in this process of hearing the precepts, you tread very, very lightly—or you endure something which is not at all intended.

5. The Nine Breaths: Doorway to the Natural State

It's not about the velocity of the breath.

Question from audience: "In which way or in which sense should one distinguish between spontaneity and impulsivity?"

Impulsivity—yes. Exactly. Impulsiveness is the same as reactivity—not necessarily. Impulsiveness can arise out of a ductless gland, out of a hormonal condition.

Is this an academic question?
No—it's an awareness question. I'm trying to realize what you're saying. Don't want to be too technical.

I'm saying that, in the context of allowing our very best aspirations to manifest, we practice the possibility to permit the manifestation of spontaneity. The spontaneity is the spontaneity of awareness—the very broadest response or emanation one can possibly imagine. To that extent, it really has no cause. It's simply a responsiveness—a very inclusive response. This is not just a reaction; it is an interaction.

Impulsiveness is always self-serving—self-serving, self-serving. Spontaneity is profoundly altruistic. Remember that the format is always just inside the intellect, waiting to get out. Spontaneity is always *below* the intellect—and near the possibility of getting out of that contentment. Just right next to impulsiveness, in fact.

We'll get back to this question. It's a big question.

Anything else regarding the mechanics of the retreat? We'll do morning and evening sessions—and voluntary early morning and late night sessions. But as I

said, the strict meditation session is not the point of this retreat. Don't feel obliged. Doing whatever else you would do in that time is as good a meditation as the session, implicitly.

So, let's begin. Each session will begin with the nine breaths. Does anybody not know the nine breaths? I'll go through it if you don't. Don't think of this as preparation. If you know this meditation, you know its immediate effectiveness. You can consider it, if you like, a bardo between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—but it's much more significant than that. See it as a door into the nature of mind, using the breath.

If you visualize it, it adds another dimension. Actually, the nine breaths are the essential practice of what we call *appana breathing*, or *kumbhaka yoga*. What are we doing doing kumbhaka yoga in the Dzogchen context? Actually, we can do anything we like in Dzogchen. But as a practice that leads us from ordinary samsaric preoccupations into the inner Dzogchen forum, then it's useful.

6. Posture and Asana in Dzogchen Meditation

I should perhaps mention: does everybody have the folder of pages we prepared? There's a very short, quintessential instruction on Dzogchen—simply sitting meditation. I mention that now because the instruction on the body is relevant.

In the mantra that I gave, it was suggested that upon opening the eyes in the morning—rising from sleep—one comes into this posture of kumbhaka yoga. So it's vital: the seat—*asana*—is key. The Sanskrit word *asana* doesn't just mean what you sit on; it means *how* you sit. (Of course, it also means the seat.)

The first thing about the seat is that it has to be comfortable. That's primary. There's no point in taking the nine features of the asana's posture if it's uncomfortable. In Dzogchen meditation, comfort is more important than in any other meditation. We're not trying to push the body into any particular shape or form. You want to be comfortable—sit comfortably.

So, sitting comfortably, breathe.

Hold the thumb on the bottom joint of the middle finger and depress the left nostril. Then release the pressure and breathe in deeply, filling the entire lung. The result of this "pop belly" is the yoga's name—the deep inhalation that pushes out the gut gives *kumbhaka yoga* its character.

Then, again depressing the left nostril, breathe out deeply—using the diaphragm to force out the last trace of air from the lungs.

In Mahayana, we use the ring finger—we press the base of the nostril with the ring finger. There is a difference between the practice here and the Mahayana practice.

Then, with the left hand—thumb on the bottom joint of the middle finger—press the right nostril and breathe out through the left nostril. Do this three times.

Then finally, three times through both nostrils. That's nine breaths.

Any questions? It's a form of root. Let's do it.

(Counts omitted for clarity, as per instruction to remove timestamps and redundant repetitions.)

So that's the basis of practice: simply sitting.

7. The Essence of Sitting: Timeless Awareness

I like to say that it doesn't matter how long you sit. The point of the sitting is the intimation of the timeless moment of awareness. The point of the exercise is the realization of the natural state of being—and the natural state of being is timeless.

It doesn't matter how many instances—how many seconds of timelessness—you actually experience. One is enough. Perhaps one is a little ambitious—perhaps even a totally broken fraction is sufficient.

Now, are there actual degrees of timelessness? You know, in Portuguese it's terrible—because the adverb for "mind" sounds like "mint." So it's hard to translate, because you're always using "mind" for that. The French word *esprit* means spirit—but I digress.

8. Garab Dorje's Three Words: Introduction, Continuity, and Liberation

This evening, I want to dwell upon the three words—the three precepts—of Garab Dorje. Garab Dorje was the *adi-guru* of the Dzogchen lineage. He is conceptualized as the Nirmanakaya of Samantabhadra—the first human manifestation of Samantabhadra.

As he passed on in the body of light—at a great age, unspecified—he quintessentialized his teaching into three words.

The first word is *introduction*—or *initiation*. What this means is direct experience of the nature of mind. This is the beginning: recognition of the nature of mind. This is the starting point—not only of the culture, but of life itself, of being.

However, it seems the human condition has led us to the point where we only see this "through a glass, darkly." Human beings are not even sure what they are looking at—they are not sure they are experiencing it. If they were actually aware of what they were seeing, there wouldn't be any necessity for this forum.

We are here precisely to remind ourselves: what we are looking at is the nature of mind. What we are looking at is Buddha emanation. What we are looking at is the essence of the three kayas.

This introduction is someone saying: *Hey—look! Actually, what you are looking at in this very moment is the nature of your mind.* The natural state of being is inherent in this very moment of sensory, intellectual, or emotional experience.

The only thing that happens is that someone communicates that they see the nature of mind in all the manifestations we are experiencing.

This first precept of Garab Dorje is *recognition of being*—the natural state of being. And that natural state is precisely non-dual—because it's completely inextricable.

9. Recognition of the Nature of Mind

But we can't say anything about it—because if you say something, there's an "I" saying something about an "it"—and in that gap of separation, the whole darkness obscures the non-dual pristine awareness.

It's non-dual—the main characteristic—because it's like the eye itself that doesn't stop observing itself, immersed in pristine awareness. Dualized perception is always there, ready to jump out. The point is: in every instant of our dualized perception, there's a non-dual essence.

And what Garab Dorje asks us to do is to recognize the non-dual nature—the timeless nature—of that awareness sitting inside all our dualized perception.

The assumption is that all human beings have some intimation of this non-dual nature of being. It's not just humans—they recognize it right here and now. Then you're on the Dzogchen path.

If the intellect starts its insistent negative chatter at this point, that mind is closed down—not able to access the solution. But we're not disallowing intellect here. Mental chatter may be least inhibited in an intellectually dominant mind—and perhaps most pernicious in the mind of an old man who simply can't stop his intellectual noise.

It has nothing to do with the capacity of the intellect. The determinant is the intuitive function of *intimating* the non-dual nature of mind.

10. Intimation, Intuition, and Direct Experience

Intimation is the key word. I use it all the time because I'm describing my own power in doing this. Intimation is just a tiny hint of intimacy. For me, that's why one can say that introduction is always secret practice—that's the real meaning of secret practice.

Intimacy doesn't have to be explained. That intimation—though it might be needle-thin, just a hint—is sufficient: a sufficient pivot, a sufficient touchstone to base one's whole life's meaning on. You only need an intimation. You only need an interval. It's enough.

However, I assume—and certainly this is true of myself, most of my friends, and probably you too—that you've had some experience much greater than a mere intimation: an overwhelming affirmation of the nature of mind.

I refer to it as an intimation, but I understand that for many here, it may have been a much more marked experience than a simple suspicion.

Question: "How do you place introspection in relation to intimation?"

I don't think "introspection" is useful here. Garab Dorje uses *recognition*—which is experiential, existential. Introspection is just pointing the mind in a direction. This is an interfusion of experience by the essential nature of mind.

"Can you give another example of intimation?"

Intimation is existential. It's an experience that arises out of the heart and suffuses the entire body. It's like the change of consciousness that occurs when you *see* a koan—not solve it, but *see* it. The koan is a method used in Zen—but what Garab Dorje is talking about is recognizing the nature of mind, the natural state, the Buddha nature.

Yes, it's a change of consciousness—but it's a bit more than that. Intimation is affirmative *recognizing*. Yes—it's intuition. "Intuition of the nature of mind" sounds more comfortable. Intimation is deep inside—it's not just a whisper; it fully infuses the being.

It's more than suspicion. The root of the word is the same as *intimacy*—and intimacy has strong, substantial infusion.

11. The Inexpressible: Non-Dual Awareness Beyond Subject and Object

Is this really an obstacle? No.

Let's get off the problem of translation and return to the meaning of the precept.

The point is: with this intimation—a slight experience of the non-dual nature of mind—we only need a little hint. A titch is enough to remind us of some major experience in our lives that gave us full intimation.

And that experience did not necessarily occur in formal meditation. It may have arisen through perception of art, nature, sex, or intimacy.

The definition of this state is *without causal condition*. Another definition is that it is *inexpressible*. Beyond causal condition—you can't pin it down. If I had a technique, I would do it here. But there is no technique guaranteed to cause this recognition.

Dzogchen techniques can be extremely efficient. Dzogchen precepts can be very effective—but they can never guarantee results. All these techniques are like basins put out to collect rainwater. You can make yourself receptive—but you can't make the rain fall.

We can open ourselves to it—but we can't make it happen. There is no technique, no causal condition. Therefore, it can happen at any time, for anyone. It *has* happened for all people—sometimes.

Do you know anyone for whom it has *never* happened?

Even in reaction to a movie—eyes watering—that may be emotional, but sometimes it's the spontaneous breaking through of awareness. These occurrences are without cause or condition, inexpressible, beyond understanding, without definition.

You can't say anything about it—because there is no subject looking at an object. If there were, you could describe it. But in non-dual awareness, subject and object are one. That's why it's inexpressible—not because you lack words, but because there's *nothing to say*.

Take a slice of time—a timeless moment. What can you say about it? Nothing. You can only speak of it *after* it's passed.

Is it a state of amazement? It's sheer simplicity. You can't say anything.

12. Why We Lose the Natural State: The Role of Fear and Separation

Why do we lose it? Because of embodiment—polarities, gender difference, the subject-object split.

I'm not telling you *why* we lose it—I'm telling you *how*. At some moment—perhaps conception, in the womb, in the birth canal, or on the first breath—there was an intimation of fear. And wherever that first fear arose, it created separation.

In that separation, the first instant was the duality of "I" and "it." This became crystallized as a subject. With separation came grasping—and the sense of self strengthened.

13. The Arising of Ego, Language, and Dualistic Emotions

The sense of self congealed in language. Desire and anger arose as consequences. Anger is the emotion of resistance; desire is the emotion of grasping. This is what we call *ignorance*—and it covers the innate awareness, the *rigpa*.

Garab Dorje said: *Look—what's underneath that very fine sheet?* In every perception, look at the light within. The light of consciousness is an intimation of *rigpa*—the non-dual light within.

Simply sitting, we automatically look at the light in sensory perception or in thought. If we do that within Garab Dorje's precept—*recognize the nature of mind*—then we are impelled into our natural state.

I say "impelled" because if it's natural, we are pulled into it. But we need to have had that epiphany—that major experience—because that's what pulls us in when we allow space.

14. Garab Dorje's First Point: Recognition as the Foundation

Garab Dorje's first point—crucial—is *recognition of the natural state of mind*, or *introduction to the natural state*. This essential understanding must be given. Once you've had that experience, it's sufficient. It initiates the snowball.

15. Ritual, Empowerment, and the Transmission of Awareness

This recognition is often given in a ritual situation—as if there were a technique to induce it. One way is through concepts. Another is the Fourth Empowerment in the *Yangti* series—done through mudra, where the nature of mind is revealed through gesture.

But ritual doesn't *transmit* the experience—it opens the possibility, like placing a basin for rain.

Introduction through concepts feeds the intellect: *We are not bundles of neuroses—we are Buddha nature itself. There's nothing but that.* That's the key.

16. The Snowball Effect: Familiarization Through Innate Certainty

Once you've had the experience, the snowball rolls by itself—familiarization increases through the destruction of doubt, not by argument, but by *innate certainty*. There's something more familiar than anything else.

17. Gender, Energy, and the Equality of Manifestation

Any attempt to define technique pre-empts non-action. Choosing feminine over masculine sets up a paradox. True action is imbued with the equality of the body's vital energies. The feminine aspect—recognition and opening—is closer to the possibility of realization.

18. Concepts as Reflections: The Doorway and the Trap

Is it only the mind in a pure state—without concepts and emotions? It's a simple moment—free of concepts, for sure. Inexpressible. You can't say anything directly without concepts.

But you *can* have awareness of the nature of mind even while conceptualizing—because the experience itself transcends concept. Concepts are memories, reflections. A concept *of* the nature of mind is always secondhand—but the *experience of a concept* can be a doorway.

19. Body, Speech, and Mind in the Natural State

Body, speech, and mind are equally active in the mode through which the nature of mind may be made aware.

DAY 2

Non-Meditation and the Touchstone of Recognition: Natural Presence

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1. The Essence of Non-Meditation

Without assertion or negation, without addition or subtraction, there is no non-judgmental mind. No duality, no rejection, no argument, no division.

2. The View and Non-Meditation as One

I can't wait to get back to these guaranteed precepts. But remember, this is one of those key precepts: that non-meditation and the view are two sides of the same coin. The view is not the view if there is any kind of contrived meditation, any kind of effort in doing something. If there is any kind of contrived meditation, it is not the view.

3. The 24-Hour Quality of Non-Meditation

We don't need to be sitting in a formal meditation posture in order to maintain non-meditation. On the contrary, if we have to sit in a formal posture to maintain non-meditation, it's not non-meditation. Non-meditation is defined by its 24-hour-a-day quality. Whatever we do in those 24 hours—that *is* non-meditation.

4. The Sacred Weight of Dzogchen Precepts

One word of warning: please don't take these precepts lightly. These precepts are the essence of the teaching of the Buddhas of the three times. There is nothing more important than these precepts. This is the key to the rainbow body.

Now, these are just concepts—but a very special variety of concepts. They are concepts that dissolve into themselves. They form part of a subtle dialectic that allows us access to the nature of mind, the light, the awareness that resides within those precepts. If we take these concepts as mere information, data, or philosophical hypotheses, then we risk getting stuck in dualistic perception without recourse.

5. Recognition as the Foundational Precept

Last night we were dealing with the first of Garab Dorje's precepts—the first word, which was *recognition*. All three words are actually contained in this one word: *recognition*. The other two words simply focus and penetrate that first word. And of course, the first word is vital. It is our understanding of that word—it is the recognition itself—that brings us here. Without that recognition, we can't be here.

6. Recognition as the Touchstone of Authentic Experience

Maybe it's a touchstone we've stored. Maybe it's something that is actually a memory at the moment. It's a touchstone—used by goldsmiths to verify if gold is real gold. That's what it's like. In this context, many people refer to it as a touchstone with the idea of contact. Right—it's a reference point.

The recognition is the touchstone; it is the point of reference that validates our every momentary experience. We need that reference point—that's the only reference point we need. We must return to that touchstone, back to that point of reference, back to that moment of recognition, that initial experience.

And again, that initial experience can arise in any context whatsoever—sacred or profane, bodily or mental—at any moment from conception to the moment of death. It doesn't matter where it came from; that's completely irrelevant. What matters is the fact that it is there and that we relate to it. The fact that we identify it with our being—that's its significance.

7. Meaning Beyond Causality and Intellect

Because it's that experience which gives us meaning. Nothing else gives our lives meaning. Everything else is causal; everything else is bound up in the field of causality. The intellect is somehow satisfied by figuring out cause and effect, the linear process of our lives. But that's just a crossword puzzle—an intellectual game. And the meaning it provides is vicarious; it's illusory.

What gives us—and gives our lives—meaning is that touchstone of recognition of the nature of mind. And that's absolute. And it's natural.

8. The Nature of Mind as Innate and Natural

Let's not argue about the word "natural." Simply take it as *innate*, *inherent*. And insofar as it is present everywhere, always and constantly accessible, for that

reason we say “natural.” But insofar as it is natural and accessible as a constant, for that reason we can always rely upon it.

9. Conceptual Models: Continuum, Field, and Ground

We can conceive of that as a continuum in time, and thereby see ourselves as a mindstream—like a comet across the sky, or as a passage from birth to death. Or we can conceive of it as a field—as the ground of being, as an internal sky that interfuses with all degrees of relativity. Or as the field of being that delivers everything with different levels of relativity.

But these are just concepts. The point about this reality is: you can’t say anything about it at all.

10. The Inexpressible Reality Beyond Conception

First of all, it is beyond conception—it cannot be conceived. If we conceive of it, it ceases to be that anymore. If it becomes a continuum, it’s a mere concept, just a structure of mind. If we see it as a field—a multidimensional field—it’s lost. It’s lost in magic, lost in mystery, lost in its overarching presence.

We know this reality. We have known this reality. If we saw it just for an instant and were born into it, we could abide by it. But ever since then, we’ve had intimations of it. And in moments of what we call grace and sensitivity—in each timeless slice of experience—we have absolute awe. We can see the reflection of it.

11. Intimations of rigpa in Every Instant

That slice—where there’s no time and no space—that moment of *tiredness* is what is called *long*. It has absolutely no equivalent in the English language, and probably in any other language. There’s no equivalent in Sanskrit either. In that moment, out of time, there’s no time—it’s not describable. There’s no word for it, though there is a term: a type of time called *long*.

In that moment—out of time—there’s a term, but no equivalent in English. It is often translated as “expanse” in mainstream Buddhist translation, particularly in the Dzogchen context. It’s the *Longdé* translation of Dzogchen.

With intimation of that nature of mind—in each instant (and I say “instant” advisedly)—there is this vast expanse of light: out of time, out of space, a timeless moment. And that is our every reality. All of us, constantly—we only know that.

12. The Trap of Intellectual Worship

The intellect tends to negate it. And if we worship the intellect—which is a common disease these days—if we worship the intellect, then we've lost that *long chain*. What we've got instead is a structure in time and space that the intellect creates. That's the intellect's creation.

So this is a mental, intellectual creation. And we worship the intellect—that's what we do. Therefore, we create this space out of time that doesn't exist, this reference of time. And we've lost the *long chain* in space.

13. Longdé and the Timeless Expanse

Like it or not, that's what we've got: that *long chain*. *Long chain rabjampa*. *Rabjampa* means "all-interfusing." *Long chain rabjampa*—that we've all got that. That's our natural state of being.

But intellectually generated concepts, in that light, induce a numbness—to such an extent that we think all we've got is this temporal-spatial structure. To such an extent that we think this mental structure is all there is.

14. The Impulse Toward Concretization

It's so much easier to accept these structures that our intellect presents than to identify with the timeless moment that is the clear light. Why? Because there is this impulse toward concretization—toward identifying what is essentially an unformed life as either this or that, something specific, something pinned down.

We try to concretize this light in a materialized way—to identify it in an amorphous light. We want things to stay the same. We want security, stability. We want the body to remain at its peak of youth. We want to wake up with the same pattern in the morning. We want the relationship to remain reliable. If only our bank balance wouldn't decrease—we'd be happier for it not to increase.

15. Impermanence and the Flow of Luminous Clarity

Of course, this is the reason why we meditate on impermanence—because actually, this congealment, that crystallization, doesn't happen. Or if it happens, it's just momentary. But actually, it is *Inchoate light* in this constant movement.

Inchoate—unformed, fluid light—and form.

In that *long chain*, in that space of reality that is our birthright—that is our nature of being—there is a cause that knows neither birth nor death. It's that inexpressible, clear-light nature that preceded our birth and will be there waiting for us at the moment of death. And it remains with us every instant of this embodiment.

16. The Ever-Present Purity of the Nature of Mind

Insofar as the embodiment arose out of that light, it never ceases to be that light. What is pure at the beginning remains pure in the middle and at the end. It cannot become anything else.

Yes, there is the tendency to conceive it as something else—and therefore the light is dimmed. But that does not change its reality. And the proof of that is in the intimation of the nature of mind in this instant of experience—the here and now.

17. The Here-and-Now as Sole Reality

Insofar as we are always in the present, we cannot move out of that tiniest moment of the here and now. Past and future are just concepts; past and future are just delusions. The reality is only here, now—it cannot be anything else.

And the way into that is through the intimation of the experience of recognition of the nature of mind.

18. Receptivity Over Technique: The Feminine Mudra

So instead of saying "recognition," let's say *intimation of recognition*. It takes the heat off. We don't have to do anything. An epiphany is not demanded of us—just an intimation of that light. And it runs right in front of our faces all the time. It's not a difficult thing.

And again, as I said yesterday, there's not actually a technique. It might be just a matter of picking up the corner of the curtain to look through—just a simple, single exercise. But we can't pin that down. There are no one-two-three stages in that process. There's no process; there's no technique—no technique except this readiness: *receptivity*, the *receptive mudra*.

You were talking yesterday about the feminine nature of that waiting. Don't take it literally—just take it as a pointed finger. For example, there's the feminine nature, the feminine aspect of this. We should see this only with a pointed finger: the feminine nature of mind.

19. Non-Duality Beyond Subject and Object

Where does non-duality come from? “The non-duality of non-duality” is the best phrase to describe the *longdé*. It’s the only non-duality we can’t express. Any expression requires a subject and an object. Any expression requires a subject conscious of an object.

And in that non-dual *long chain*, there’s no possibility of that. There are no reference points there. There’s no subject. Well—if there’s no reference point out there, the subject has nothing to do. It’s redundant; the ego is lost. There’s nothing to pin down in that *long chain*.

It’s like—and again, it’s a timeless moment—there’s no time in that space, so there’s no time for a process of perception to occur. The reference points out there that the subject pins down or draws in—you want to see that those functions fall back into themselves, and there’s no ego function left.

On the other hand, of course, there’s still something there. On the other hand, if we fall into nihilism—into the negation of both subject and object, both self and other—we’ve missed the point.

Non-duality is not a statement of denial. It is a statement of the indeterminacy of the absolute—not an absolute that is up and beyond or way down the line at the end of life, but the absolute that is present right here in the *long chain*.

20. The Exclamation of “Hūṃ” as Ritual Shock and Entry

And it’s for that reason that we can’t get access to it—because how can we structure time and space in order to access something that is completely beyond time, space, and concepts?

But there is this key—the key, the first, number one precept: **non-action**.

So what I want to do now is to remind you of Patrul Rinpoche’s method of entry into that non-active sphere: the exclamation of the syllable **HŪṂ**.

Rather than me talk about it, let’s do it—so you can see what effect it has. You know what effect it has. But see it in the context of what I’ve just been saying.

It’s not *the* method to access the nature of mind—the non-dual nature of mind. But it produces a state of non-action in which we are optimally sensitive to the potential.

One thing behind the explosion of sound is that there's a silence—conceptual silence. And as you know from your meditation training, between two thoughts there's the light trying to pop out. The light tries to pop out.

What we're doing, of course, when we use this sound, is performing a ritual. And it sounds right—perhaps that's what we were talking about last night: What is ritual?

In one way, the practice of exclaiming this syllable grooves the mind so that, in the moment of synchronicity—when the sky is about to fall—it will fall easily. And maybe that is the most important thing.

But on the other hand, the actual performance of the ritual *does* create a change in consciousness—not in the minds of lazy monks who've been playing games during the lead-up to that exclamation, but for those who have remained mindful and sensitive. For them, consciousness *has* changed by that exclamation.

That's not *it*—it can only be *it* if that one-in-a-billion chance of a fall-from-the-sky happens at that moment. But it's an interesting change of mind.

To maximize the effect of this exclamation, it's beneficial to be in a calm state—so we often do it in periods of formal meditation.

And I should mention something else about the ritual nature of it: the ritual is actually a model of something that can happen in time and space at a specific, similar juncture. In other words, an explosion in one's mindstream—in the normal flow of life—can actually penetrate the wall of concepts.

For example, I know two people very well who became Buddhists—converted upon being hit by a car. Or we can go further: a similar effect is contrived by divorce, or being told of one's cancer diagnosis. Precisely—a shock in one's life stream.

The ritual is the exclamation of the syllable **HŪṂ**.
The actuality is a shock—it can be mental, vibrational, or physical.

The syllable can be vocalized by oneself or by someone else—probably doing it oneself is more effective. In practice, there's a danger of overdoing it. I'm not saying the syllable should be held sacred, but it's useful to keep it a little bit sanctified. We don't want it so sacred that it becomes inaccessible.

So let's start this practice with vocalization.

DAY 3

Taking Refuge in the Nature of Mind: Radical Dzogchen and the Three Precepts of Garab Dorje

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1. The Social and Ultimate Meaning of Refuge

Of course, we take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. But this is just a social thing—so that we can tell our friends where we are at the moment. We are going to explain why we are going into retreat, or doing the seminar, or something. I guess it can be useful sometimes, although at other times it can create problems. I think if you have to tell your mother where you are going—she is a devout Christian—then you might need this conventional refuge.

But what we actually take refuge in, and the only thing that is worthwhile taking refuge in, which gives meaning to refuge, is the nature of mind, of course.

2. Refuge in rigpa: Pure Presence as the True Object of Refuge

And then this refuge business becomes very important. Because when I say "I take refuge," it evokes the sense of here and nowness. You are putting yourself right into the presence of the here and now. The phrase then becomes: *I take refuge in the rigpa.* At the moment, I am translating rigpa as "pure presence." I don't want to use the phrase too much, because it becomes very easily worn out. It is better to change it regularly.

So the Lord has always had a pristine presence about it. *I take refuge in the Trikayas.* That's good. What does that mean? It may mean different things to each of us, because it is defined differently in different contexts.

3. Surrender Without Going Anywhere: The Non-Dual Ground

But for me, again at this very moment, it means cognitive awareness. *I take refuge in the three dimensions of cognitive awareness*: cognitive emptiness. The emptiness is useful because it evokes nothing—after all. Then there must be surrender: a falling into that place of refuge. That implies, of course, a loss of sense of self. This implies a loss of the sense of the will.

When we are talking about the ground of being as this all-embracing sphere or field, that concept is useful because we are identifying with something much larger than a little body. We are identifying, first of all, with something that everybody—everybody except your beings—has. More than that, we are identifying with what is the all-embracing cosmic essence.

So we—ourselves, our little self—becomes just this finite point at the apex of the pyramid or at the center of a vast sphere. Whatever you see, the identification with that requires a surrender: a surrender of sense of self, a surrender of concept of self, and at the same time an identification with what is all-embracing.

4. Rejecting Gradualism: No Path, No Goal, No Progress

The possibility of surrender implies total surrender—the capacity to surrender the will to surrender. We have to be careful here because we are not going anywhere. This—what we are taking refuge in—is not different from what we already are. It is necessary to be very careful here because this does not mean that we are going to a specific place. We are taking refuge in something that already exists.

This is a key point of the Dzogchen view: we do not make the goal different from the Dzogchen point. This is not going anywhere. We are simply turning on the light where we are, right here and now.

That is a problem with the word "surrender," because that gives the impression of doing something, going somewhere, changing a little bit. That enters onto another aspect of the same preset: *there is nothing to change.* Forget the notion of improvement. Put away the dirty words: improvement, progress, development, change, transformation, evolution. Forget it. And this is another aspect of this preset: there is nothing like progress, transformation, evolution—all these types of concepts are irrelevant.

5. Buddhahood as Delusion: The Starting Point Is the Goal

These things might be going on in time and space, but they are completely irrelevant to us. Insofar as we buy into a laden, graduated path leading toward a goal which is considered superior to the place of starting, we divorce ourselves from the possibility of identification with rigpa. That is to say, there is no benefit anywhere other than in the place where we are at the moment.

And of course, the first thing on that list to cross out is "Buddhahood." Now stop using the word. You stop using this word, or you stop using the word. I have

stopped using the word. I use “Buddha” just as a noun. Calm down. *Buddha is here and now.* Buddhahood is a totally delusory goal at the end of a stupid path—because the starting point is the goal.

So: *I take refuge in Buddha. I take refuge in the here. I take refuge in rigpa. I take refuge in pure presence. I take refuge in this timeless moment.*

6. The Bodhisattva Vow in Dzogchen: Spontaneous Bodhichitta

And in the ritual of formal sitting, we conceptualize that refuge as the syllable “A.” We vocalize the Hūṃ after the nine breaths. And after the refuge comes the bodhisattva vow—the generation of bodhichitta.

It shows that bodhichitta cannot be generated through a fabricated, contrived mental process. Even the idea that that is possible provides an obstacle to the natural generation. The generation of bodhichitta is an automatic process that accompanies the spontaneity of the nature of mind.

7. Bodhichitta Arises Outside Causality

I’m not going to describe any kind of causal process there. I simply ask you to use that touchstone again: when do you know bodhichitta? Of course, I mean—comparison: when do you know that? Surely we know it only fortuitously. We know it synchronously—without causative effect, suddenly, without a place in a linear chain. It’s a here-and-now time’s manifestation, welling up out of the heart, just descriptive.

Does it arise in any other situation? Yes—when we are faced with abject poverty or heart-rending pain in the environment or with our own. Yes, love and kindness arise: a relative compassion. That’s not it.

Let’s take the proverbial sunset situation, where real compassion arises *without an object*, without any image out there at all—no reason, no serial causal process. Let’s see how bodhichitta arises without causality, without spontaneous context. Because the compassion—the generation of bodhichitta, the compassion of mind—arises identical to the spontaneity of manifestation out of the nature of mind.

8. Non-Action and the Waiting Game

It cannot be forced. There’s no technique. And if it doesn’t arise—and if it doesn’t arise—*non-action* is the key there. If non-action is practiced, then what is the key to non-action? The Dzogchen precept. If the Dzogchen precepts don’t work, then it’s a waiting game.

9. The Ritual Syllables: Hūṃ and the Role of Mantra

The bodhichitta is through the seeds on the bone: *Hūṃ* for the refuge, *Hūṃ* for the generation. The syllables, of course, are best used when they are in the ritual meditation situation. But you can use them, or they may arise randomly.

10. Garab Dorje's Three Precepts: Recognition, Conviction, Confidence

Good, so let's go back to Garab Dorje, the root. The first word, a precept, is *recognition*. The second is *conviction*. Now you might think, "Oh well, that precept of Garab Dorje and the commentary on it—yes, we can go along with that; that's good, and we can accept that." And then you might get up at the end of the session, at the end of this retreat, and—having believed that precept—it gradually fades away and no longer has potency.

Maybe that's enough. Maybe that's all you need—that reason. Maybe that's the button that, when pressed, lights up the pinball machine fully for the duration. But most likely, we need feeding. We need to be fed. We need to feed ourselves. We need to maintain the connection with the source of that certainty about meaning and the nature of mind and so on.

11. Recognition: The First Precept and Immediate Knowing

And the key—or rather, the proof of the pudding—is that awareness is maintained in difficult situations. In the 24-hour-a-day meditation, whatever arises becomes a source of reinforcement, intensification of the conviction about the nature of mind.

12. Conviction Through Equality: Seeing Emptiness in All Phenomena

I mentioned the Hundred Names of Peaceful Deities that represent the whole range of possibilities of our psychic life. The Wrathful and Peaceful Deities represent the gamut of our psychic life. They represent the presence of awareness in every aspect of our psychic lives. Or look at it another way: their photographs of the long chain.

The long chain—yes, space and light—but in that space and light, there's a form visible. God has something illusory, and of course it's color. And the color and the

formulation of the color is photographed as one of the Hundred Names of Peaceful Deities.

What that means is that whatever arises, we are looking at the cognitive awareness—the cognitive emptiness—of the experience. So that nothing at all can arise which does not connect us to that root source.

13. Deconstructing Dualities: Sacred/Profane, Clean/Dirty, Good/Bad

And when we say "nothing arises which cannot," then we have to be inclusive conceptually here. I mean, we have to destroy the distinction between sacred and profane. Because until we do so, we're pushing the profane away and putting the sacred in.

Likewise, we must be aware of the sameness between what is clean and what is dirty—on every level. But it's only so *if you recognize it as it is.* If you don't recognize it, we can start conceptually: get rid of the discrimination between good and bad. And then we're able to look without obscuration.

14. Working with Neuroses: Sexuality as a Mirror of Discrimination

Well, you might say, "What kind of direct perception is that?" We're actually nibbling away at the intellectual function here. Yes, we can start with deconstruction of our intellectual function, process, propensities. This is to enlarge what Vajrayana is about.

Let's go a little bit further in the same direction. We need to actually address our own phobias, our own personal neuroses. And I mean *recognize*—but simply by the recognition, we get rid of the discrimination.

Okay, use sex as the obvious illustration here. Sex is an obvious illustration—not a very good one, perhaps—but at this stage of our life, it's relatively easy to identify our particular sexual propensity. We're not looking so much at good and bad as at what is preferred and what is denied.

We can't see that photograph—that image of desire—included in most of the 108 Wrathful and Peaceful Deities, until we can look through both the positive and the negative, or the acceptable and the unacceptable aspects of our sexuality.

15. Emptiness as the Basis for Tenderness and Liberation

And until we can do so—if we can see what we desire in the sexual arena and what we reject—until we can see both of those things as empty, then we have an obstruction, a serious obstruction, in the recognition of the nature of mind in every situation.

You mean that in your own sexuality or in others? In our own. I don't think there's any distinction there—if you see it in your own, then you see it in others. If you can accept your own body of sexuality in all its aspects, then you accept others'—as empty. In this context, that's *as empty.* Emptiness is the key to equality. Emptiness is the key to tenderness.

16. The Snowball Effect of Conviction

This is Garab Dorje's second precept: *conviction.* And we gain conviction by putting the principle of equality into practice. And we do that by understanding that our preferences are just comically determined momentaries—momentarily, as it were.

By recognizing the emptiness in both what is desirable for us and what is negative—by recognizing the equality of the positive and the negative—there's a matter of preference, not good about it in itself. That way, we're getting rid of our whole belief system. Our belief system is based upon preferences: what is good and what is bad for us. And the whole universe is created around that basic hypothesis.

And the dualism—where the unity becomes the dualism—at that point, the belief system belongs. That's liberation, not a loss. That is the meaning of liberation: there should not be a feeling of loss when the belief system blows up.

17. The Difficulty of Seeing Relational Neuroses

Once we've identified the care, the light, and the bliss also in what is most adverse in our lives, then the snowball effect picks up speed—because anything and everything is identified as the nature of mind.

When we have more and more conviction, it becomes like a snowball—growing and growing—and everything that happens in our lives is caught by this conviction of the knowledge of the nature of mind.

But even so, if you recognize that mental pattern—that neurosis—is empty, and when you do not recognize it—even so, if you're still recognized—sometimes you still have the same negative patterns. If you still have the same destructive

patterns, even if you recognize it as empty, the pattern seems the same. All will become clear.

One thing I should say here is: do not underestimate the difficulty of recognizing the emptiness of our neurosis. Because our neurosis—perhaps in the sexual field—is easy to identify, but there are other neuroses in the relational field that are not easy to perceive. It is therefore important to recognize the core of our neuroses.

18. Retreat as Clarification, Not Escape

In order to bring those areas of our consciousness which are dim and obscure into focus, we may need to go into some secure situation—retreat. We reduce the intensity. We make the frame a little smaller, but keep and pull the energy down a little bit so that we can see things that otherwise would be obscure.

So we leave the city and go into the countryside. We leave the countryside and the village and go into the cave. Or in some way, we know where we are stressed and we know our own parameters—so in some way, we reduce the stress and clarify things thereby.

We are not doing the Hindu ascetic thing here—going into the cave for life. Simply taking a break in order to see things a little more clearly—and then, when that is done, we come back into saṃsāra.

Why? Because the bottom line is: the greater the intensity, the greater the speed, the greater the stress—the greater the potential for liberation. That's indicative of the conviction—that we need that degree of conviction. Then we can walk anywhere. We can walk into any dark place and engage in any circumstance whatsoever.

19. Confidence in Release: The Third Precept and Karma Exhaustion

Then we can actually explore the nooks and crannies of the Alike Yana. Then we can talk about emptying our karmic reserves.

The third precept is *confidence*—confidence in release. And here we are talking about release in a technical sense. This is the release of each perception—every nanosecond of internal or external perception—arising, abiding, dissolving. The dissolution *is* the release.

But in time and space, as you know, every action has an effect—that's karma, the knock-on effect. If the experience takes place in the *long shan*, in that timeless

moment, there is no knock-on effect. Insofar as that moment of experience is released, then the propensity to return to that place again is decreased.

If we can see the emptiness of the neurosis right in front of our faces—and see the light-form—then, in the moment of the dissolution of that instant of perception, the tendency for that neurosis to return is reduced. That's crucial. This is the essence of this third precept of Garab Dorje.

Because what is the point of observing the mind and its phenomena if it's just going to go on and on and on? The point is *release.* And release is actually the exhaustion of karma—finally.

When the texts talk about the exhaustion of karma, they're not talking about the finishing of the propensity to articulate particular words in particular ways—not even to repeat emotional reaction patterns. What we're talking about here is the propensity to embodiment—the propensity to visualize oneself as a human being, as a psycho-organism, or more particularly as a being of flesh and blood.

Because at the end of karmic determinacy—at the end of the process of cause and effect—what we've got left is typically a body of light.

20. Faith as Progressive Certainty in Dzogchen Practice

Confidence in this process of liberation is the third of Garab Dorje's precepts. You see the thing fully and you know it completely—and in that moment, you're free of attachment to it. You're free of the desire to replicate that moment of experience. Then they have done that—crossed it off the list.

Is it true? I'm not sure if I understand the difference between the second and the third precept. The second is conviction; the third is confidence. If I am convinced of something, I have confidence in that—absolutely.

And you would say: once you recognize the thing—once you have the initial recognition fully—then the conviction and the confidence are in there. So, as I said, you've only got one precept, really. But to elaborate: it's conviction in the efficacy of the practice; confidence in the process of release.

If you're looking at these precepts with a non-dual mind, then the whole thing is instantaneous. The recognition, the conviction, and the confidence—it's momentary and it's complete.

But if you want to stretch it out a little bit—with the conviction about that experience of recognition of the nature of mind—then you have the confidence to walk into any kind of situation whatsoever that you fear. And it is that faith that

allows the process of liberation—and the process of liberation to occur automatically.

Existentially here—in making this realization more than a momentary experience, but more of an extended path—we need to get the juice out of that experience of reality in order to be able to walk in places where we have previously been afraid.

And that's what Garab Dorje's precepts do. You can do it immediately. That's just another way to say that these precepts expand our minds. And expanding the mind is expanding the dimensions of our field of activity.

It's difficult to say exactly how that expansion occurs or where it may occur—because surely it happens differently for every individual.

DAY 4

Separating Saṃsāra from Nirvāṇa: The Rushen Preliminaries

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1. Starting from Ordinary Mind

We start off with this assumption, right in our ordinary states of mind. Sometimes we're happy, sometimes we're sad, but generally, it's some kind of mixture of these two things.

2. The Paradox of Saṃsāra as Nirvāṇa

Saṃsāra is nirvāṇa—that's where we're at. That is the starting point, and that is also the goal, of course. But still, this present state of saṃsāra being nirvāṇa is not totally satisfactory, and we think, "How can we improve it?"

3. Conventional Paths: Theravada, Mahayana, and Batriyana

That's the starting point for the Theravada, the Mahayana, and the Batriyana traditions. We establish our own present state as unsatisfactory and establish the goal as a state of perfection.

4. The Unique Starting Point of Dzogchen

In the Mahayana and Batriyana, for instance, we set out on the path by doing the preliminary meditations or contemplations: contemplation upon the precious human body, upon impermanence, upon cause and effect, and upon the inevitability of negative repercussions from negative actions. We begin that process of purification, which takes different durations for different individuals along different paths.

5. What Is Rushen?

In Dzogchen, however, we have this practice called *Rushen*. Rushen, literally or traditionally, means "separation of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa." What do we do in separating saṃsāra from nirvāṇa when, of course, what we want is the identity of these two things?

6. The Elastic Band Analogy: Duality and Integration

You can look at it in different ways. First of all, if you stretch an elastic band, then the further you stretch it apart, the greater the duality, the greater the dualism you create. And if you let it go, then the greater the impact and the more the force of integration.

7. Aspiration as the Gateway to Recognition

Even in Dzogchen, we must—first of all—recognize (or, as much as that's not quite the right word), but apprehend that we need to make a wish for the recognition of the natural state before we can actually do it. Or just say we need to make an aspiration: the expression of a wish that will be automatically fulfilled. Before we can make that aspiration fully and put our heart into it, we need to separate saṃsāra from nirvāṇa. We need to separate our pain from our pleasure and be in a state where we identify fully with the pain. Then we can fully aspire to the pleasure.

Otherwise, we go in and out of it—as we do day by day. Sometimes we feel okay, then not really anything to complain about. And then the next day is a down day, and there's everything to complain about. And then somebody asks you, really, "Well, how are you?" You say, "Ah, okay—it's a mixture." Don't mix it up.

8. Outer Rushen: Enacting the Six Realms

So the Rushen is to separate saṃsāra from nirvāṇa. And we've got two ways to do this: one is outer and one is inner. From the outer, you can see what the process means. In Tibet, the tradition was to take yourself off to a deserted plateau and hole up in a cave, take off your clothes, and live like an animal for up to three months.

9. The Role of Solitude and Wild Practice

Living out in the wild without any creature comforts, without any support, the yogi enacts each of the six mythic states of being. That is, the yogi tries to pass through the six realms. In this enactment, the projection of a neurotic condition—an erotic condition—is externalized. And in that enactment, the full force of its particular kind of suffering is experienced. We act out our neuroses. This is best done in that solitude on the Tibetan plateau. You could do it here, of course—in the woods or mountains—but you're constricted. In Asia, particularly South Asia,

there's always somebody in sight. You need solitude for it. Essentially, it's an acting-out process, and the acting out itself is the full experience of saṃsāra.

10. Nedu: The Collapse into Natural Relaxation

At the end of any period of enactment, there is what you call *nedu*—which is complete relaxation. You put yourself on the ground after having dramatically, madly, insanely acted out. So at the end of any given period of practice, in full relaxation, throw yourself on the ground—and in that state is an intimation of your own nature.

11. Clarification as Separation: Culinary Metaphors

So in this way, nirvāṇa and saṃsāra are separated. It's clarification—in the literal, even culinary sense—where you boil something and the result is a precipitation of the solid and the liquid. The transformation of the element, right? When you boil it... You don’t have to speak in this way, but you transform it and set it. Take the clarification of butter: boiled butter separates, the solid falls out, and what remains is *ghee*. Or when milk is boiled with a culture, the solids precipitate and you get curds and whey.

It's probably a better illustration for what I’m talking about: something that was mixed up becomes separated into two completely different things. When saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are mixed up in a soup, they become separated and identifiable as something eminently pleasurable and something painful.

12. The Power of a Clarified Mind: A Mahasiddha Example

There's an example of that in the Mahasiddha stories. Travelers were carrying precious stones through a forest. They heard something approaching and, afraid that thieves were near, hid. It happened to be a Mahasiddha. The Mahasiddha heard the clinking of jewels and called out, "What have you got? Who are you?" The travelers replied, "Oh, we’ve just got charcoal here."

Because the Mahasiddha’s mind was so immediately purified and clarified, that statement was instantly manifest. They found their jewels had turned to charcoal. I’m telling that story just to indicate the potency of a mind that is clarified.

13. Outer Rushen as Rapid Purification

The outer Rushen is obviously a very gross method of dealing with the situation—working with the body on that physical level. What it means is that the

purification is a very fast purification process. It's purifying the ability to perceive the nature of mind here and now. And if not that, then you're purifying the aspiration toward that. It's defining a self-fulfilling aspiration.

Probably we'll all agree that even in this mixed-up state, saṃsāra-and-nirvāṇa prayer can work. But when the mind is clarified or purified in this way, it works much faster and much more effectively. We go one step further—into the perfect union of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—and of course, everything works so well that a thought is immediately manifest.

14. Transition to Inner Rushen

There's an inner Rushen, however. The inner Rushen uses both energy and mind.

15. The Need for "Magic" Before Non-Action

You might say, "But isn't the nature of mind here and now present? Isn't there nothing to do—non-action?" Well, no—we're not there yet. We're at the point of aspiration. We're looking for doors into that space. We're looking for the key—in terms of prison.

Yes, if we were already in that state of non-dual reality, then even thinking of the key would immediately precipitate us out of it. But if we're in this dualistic place—where we are aspiring to non-duality—then we're in a position where magic will work. And the magic opens the doors and windows of that prison.

16. The Symbolic Power of Sacred Syllables

The syllables are part of that magic. Again, we could go into a very interesting digression about the magical nature of syllables—or look at a larger perspective and think about the magical nature of symbols. It's a very interesting topic, and I doubt anybody here has serious doubts that symbols have this magical power.

17. Secular and Sacred Symbols: Universal Magic

We have these symbols here: the vajra and the bell. The vajra is, of course, a formalized thunderbolt. Nobody—not even a child—can doubt the symbolic power of a thunderbolt. The bell is rather more sophisticated. I don't know that the bell has the same significance in all cultures—it's a female symbol. But for males, it's obviously the beat on the string.

Religious symbols are religious symbols because they *work*. But even in the secular arena, symbols like eyeglasses are magical—the magnification of what is illegible, or giving sight to the blind. Even in our own culture, symbols like the eye

represent the ability to see through blindness. But symbols don't always automatically give up their meaning.

18. Working with the Syllable HŪṂ: Form and Sound

Take the syllable *HŪṂ*. What can you read into that? What can it give you symbolically? It's opaque. Maybe its significance *is* in its opacity—like a random figure. The intellect can take it apart.

For those unfamiliar with Tibetan: the central part is the root consonant. The lines above lengthen the vowel sound; the crescent and dot (sun and moon) nasalize it. But that analysis doesn't convey symbolic meaning—it just names the parts. So let's leave the calligraphic shape and concentrate on the *sound*.

What happens in the vocal cords is an opening—the simple opening—and the vowel sound moves freely from here up to here, actually drawing energy inward to a focal point.

19. Inner Rushen Practice: Visualization, Breath, and Color

In the inner Rushen, we visualize the syllable, hang it on the breath, and send it out from the heart center into the vibrato—then concentrate on the sound. The exercise utilizes two levels: energy and mind. The breath indicates the energy dimension; the visualization of the syllable indicates the mind dimension.

This is not static visualization—it's dynamic. First, we must learn to visualize clearly. Some people struggle with visualization; others can't hold tonal imagery. For those who can't visualize the syllable, focus on its color. Most people *can* see color in the mind's eye—and color carries vital symbolic meaning: **blue** is the color of peaceful power; **red** is the color of wrathful power.

20. Instructions for Practicing the Blue and Red HŪṂ Cycles

First, visualize a large, single, blue *HŪṂ* in the body. As you breathe out, exhale a cloud of blue *HŪṂ*s—starting minuscule, growing as large as the biggest object in your visual field. Imagine your body seated in an energetic field, giving off clouds of *HŪṂ*s of all sizes, projected outward on the breath.

These scintillating sky-blue fumes banish into all objects in the visual field—especially animate beings, but also inanimate ones, from the smallest specks to

the largest pillars and rafters. If you can't visualize the syllable, visualize a pattern of blue light in the cloud.

Visualize the *HŪṂ* in your body facing outward—so if projected, it would appear face-on to you. The emitted *HŪṂ*s all face the same direction. On the in-breath, draw all those countless fumes back through your breathing apparatus into the single *HŪṂ* in your body.

For beginners: place a clear image of *HŪṂ* in front of you to familiarize yourself with its form. For those already familiar: sharpen its definition internally and begin the breath cycle with as much precision as possible—maintaining color, orientation, and dynamism.

Then repeat the cycle with **red** *HŪṂ*s—visualizing them on the out-breath, filling the space, purifying the environment and beings, then drawing them back into the heart center on the in-breath. The rhythm, tone, and quality of breath should express purification—not concealment, but burning clarity.

This is not elemental work in the classical sense, nor is it centered on a specific chakra—though it unfolds from the heart region. Its essence is symbolic, energetic, and aspirational: a magical preparation for the effortless recognition of rigpa.

DAY 5

Deconstructing Thought: Non-Attachment Through the Light of Mind

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1. Ritual Practice and the Primacy of View

We are here to build a small ritual practice, but the view is very important. You might think you've got enough—you've got the rule at the time, you've got the important precepts done. But the ramifications of the precepts, the ramifications of the view, are immense. Every thought that we think is qualified by the view. In fact, every thought that arises can be modified to make it congruent with the view—but that's not the point.

2. The Pervasiveness of the Impulse to Improve

Take the precept regarding improvement. How much of our day is actually taken up by the impulse to improve ourselves—in body, speech, or mind; the physical, the energetic, or the mental? It's constant. But it's not possible—and not necessary—to alter every thought that arises. That's clear.

3. Detachment, Not Modification, Is the Key

We're not trying to change our thoughts. The point is not to change them; the point is detachment from them. The point is to relieve ourselves of our belief system, to detach ourselves from our thoughts. When I say "detach from thoughts," I mean to relieve ourselves of the emotional attachment—or the negative emotional attachment—to those thoughts.

4. The Precept of Non-Meditation: Without Acceptance or Rejection

As the precept for non-meditation goes: without assertion and without negation, without acceptance and without rejection, without approval or denial. Every thought that arises in our mind carries one of these qualities. We don't try to inhibit the assertion or the negation. We don't try to cultivate it, neutralize it, or transform it.

5. Recognition as Automatic Release

We simply recognize it as assertion—or negation—and in that recognition is the release: an automatic, natural process of release. We are freed from the attachment, or the negative attachment. That's what Buddha Shakyamuni was on about. Basically, his teaching was: get rid of your attachment and you get rid of your pain.

6. Buddha's Core Insight: Attachment and Suffering

Each vehicle—the various Yanas—has its own technique for dealing with attachment. But Dzogchen says: just leave it alone. Completely. Don't do anything. Simply see it. Look at it. Leave it alone. And in that recognition, the attachment dissolves. You see? So it really all comes down to thoughts.

7. Dzogchen's Radical Simplicity: Just Leave It Alone

We can deal with emotions—that's another story—but here we're dealing with thoughts. The whole thing is thoughts. What do you know other than what you think? You might say, "What about a very strong emotion that possesses the entire body?" But even then, there's a thought along with that emotion. The emotion might be dominant, but you can't have an emotion without a thought—and you can't have a thought without some emotional tone.

8. The Primacy of Thought in Experience

Here, we're dealing with the whole phenomenon from the point of view of thought. So long as we believe in a particular thought—so long as we assert its validity—we are attached to it. Likewise, if we deny its validity, we have a negative attachment to it. It doesn't matter whether the thought is trivial or profound. So long as there's assertion or rejection attached to it—so long as we want to cultivate it, beautify it, or use it to save ourselves or the world—we're attached.

9. Belief as the Root of Attachment

So the precept comes down to this: **don't believe in your thoughts**. Belief is the glue—the stickiness—that pulls us down all the time. And I'm not only talking about belief in God or belief in the self. I'm also talking about believing that this mango will taste good—or that it won't. Even simple, domestic, logistical thoughts—we need to cut belief in them, too.

10. Cutting the Entire Belief System at Its Root

We don't deal with individual beliefs or individual thoughts. We cut the whole belief system at its root. And we do that simply by looking into the light of the mind as the thought arises. What is a thought, after all?

11. Thought as Light: Metaphors from Dzogchen

If you want metaphors to describe it: it's like a shooting star, a rainbow, a candle flame, or a streak of light. Very light, very ephemeral. Whatever image you use, it's something about light. Can you think of a way to describe thought that doesn't include illumination? In Dzogchen practice, we can't—because thought, when seen correctly, *is* illumination.

12. Visualization in Practice: Thought as a Streak of Light

For the sake of this practice, visualize the thought—or identify the thought—as a streak of light. However we may describe it, in order to serve the practice, we must include illumination. Thereby, every thought becomes a door into the light of the mind.

13. Thought as Doorway to the Luminous Mind

We're looking through the line drawing of the thought, focusing not on the form but on the light within. We're like the sky in which the birds of thought are flying. The concept of thought—as a fixed idea—is a limitation of the mind. You can conceive of it as a crystallization, a congealing that becomes concrete. But what is the life of a thought? What is its duration?

14. Beyond Verbal Thought: Intuition and Non-Dual Awareness

Thought appears syllable by syllable because thoughts arise as verbalizations in our own language. But there is more mind beyond thought—plenty of mind beyond thought. Beyond discursive thought lies a non-verbal level of mind, more akin to images or symbols—forms of intuition and spontaneity that can't be squeezed into verbal discourse. Poetry often points to this dimension: not discursive, but expansive, opening into vastness rather than closing down into fixed ideas.

15. Why Thought Subsumes All Experience

Still, I will say this: you can't have a symbol, a picture, or an emotion without somewhere there being a thought. Descartes didn't say, "I picture, therefore I am." He said, "I think, therefore I am"—because thought subsumes everything else. Even non-conceptual experience is interpreted, framed, or remembered through thought.

16. The Form and Formless Essence of Thought

What's important is getting rid of attachment to our beliefs—by identifying the light in the very moment the thought arises. The thought has a form, and it has a formless essence. What we do is look *through* the form into the nature of the thought—which is light.

17. The Doctrine of Light in Dzogchen Vocabulary

The Dzogchen doctrine is saturated with light. Its technical vocabulary isn't large—maybe fifty or sixty words—but a large proportion are precise terms for different forms of light. In English, we only have two or three words for light, but in Tibetan, there are many. Here, we're speaking of the light of the mind that is inherent in the forms it creates—often translated more accurately as *radiance*.

18. Pointillism as a Modern Analogy for Luminous Mind

Consider pointillism in art: tiny points of pure color, each a dot of light. From a distance, they coalesce into form. Similarly, in the mind—three-dimensionally, like a hologram—each point is pure light. The disposition of these points creates the illusion of form. But if you look *into* the form, what you see is light. The form dissolves, and unity is revealed—non-dual, undivided.

19. Resting in Awareness: The Practice of Non-Action

When we're doing nothing—simply sitting—we relax into the nature of mind. We identify with awareness itself. The more we do this—whether in duration or intensity—the more we pass through form into light. If this sounds too idealistic, consider what happens at the end of the out-breath. In that pause, you naturally identify with space. The grasp of thought loosens. You relax into spaciousness—

like returning to the blue and red wombs dissolving into the visual field. You're identifying with the vastness, the spaciousness of mind.

20. Non-Action as the Ground of Spontaneous Responsiveness

For that reason, if you look into the thought, there's a natural tendency for the form to dissolve into its luminous components. This isn't transcendental fantasy—it's what happens when you stop fabricating. Non-action—*chatral* in Tibetan—doesn't mean inactivity. It means non-fabrication: no concentration, no visualization, no watching the senses, no deliberate mental activity. You fall back into mind itself, allowing all imagination to subside with you.

Non-action is like the depth of the ocean. Thought is the foam. Mental activity is the surface waves. But in the depths, there is spontaneous movement that arises from the totality—not just your personal mind, but the common mind, the cosmic mind. When you reach that depth, action arises—not from impulse, not from conditioning, but from awareness itself.

That's why the precept is so simple, so radical: **don't believe in your thoughts**. And the method is even simpler: **look**.

DAY 6

Fear, Division, and the Return to Dzogchen's Natural State

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1. Translating the Dzogchen View

I've always used translation to demonstrate the Dzogchen view—not just as a scholarly exercise, but as a way to point directly to recognition. What I'm sharing here comes from both historical sources and my own long engagement with these teachings.

2. Vairocana and the Transmission of Dzogchen Tantras

Vairocana was one of the first monks to ordain in Tibet. After Samye Monastery was established, the main verse of the Dzogchen lineage in Tibet was consecrated, and a dozen young Tibetan men were ordained. Two or three of them were chosen to learn Sanskrit—Vairocana was the principal among them—and they were sent down to northwestern India to bring back the seminal Dzogchen tantras. That journey itself was quite remarkable.

3. The Historical Context: Swat Valley and the Land of the Dakinis

They walked right across western Tibet and then south into what is now the Swat Valley in Pakistan—a region that has since been reclaimed from the Taliban. But historically, this area was known as Oddiyana, the land of the dakinis. It's the very birthplace of Padmasambhava. At the time, it was part of a broader cultural sphere that included parts of what we now call northeastern Afghanistan. The Swat Valley was huge then—culturally, spiritually—and it was there that Vairocana was directed to meet a master.

4. Master Śrī Siṃha and the Secret Transmission

In Oddiyana, Vairocana was taken to a master named Śrī Siṃha. From what I can tell, Śrī Siṃha was probably of Chinese origin and had settled in Oddiyana during the Tang dynasty. He'd received the full Dzogchen transmission from Mañjuśrīmitra and was the direct disciple of Garab Dorje, from whom he'd received Garab Dorje's final three-word teaching.

But at that time, the king of Oddiyana was hostile to Dzogchen teachings—they were being hidden and restricted. Śrī Siṃha feared for his life. So he devised a clever method of transmission: he taught Mahayana openly during the day and Dzogchen secretly at night.

5. The Five Foundational Dzogchen Tantras

Vairocana wrote down these night teachings in invisible ink so there'd be no physical evidence of the transmission. And here's something that has always mystified me: Śrī Siṃha spoke the teachings into a trumpet placed directly into Vairocana's ear. I don't know why that method was used—but it worked. Vairocana received a large number of the core Dzogchen tantras.

Eventually, three of the original group made it back to Tibet, pursued by the king's forces, but they arrived safely—not in Lhasa, as some say, but at Samye. The Tibetan capital at the time was a tent city pitched near the monastery. There, Vairocana immediately translated five principal tantras, which became the bedrock of Dzogchen in Tibet. I've translated those five myself in my book *Eye of the Storm*, which is now being translated into Portuguese.

6. On Translating *rigpa*: From Gnosis to Pure Presence

I used to translate the Tibetan word *rigpa* as "gnosis"—I did so in both *Eye of the Storm* and in *The Naljor Dharmas*. But over time, I've moved away from that. Lately, I've been using "pure presence" instead.

"Gnosis" is a Greek word, and while it may point to non-dual awareness, it's picked up a lot of baggage over 2,500 years—especially from Christian Gnosticism. That context has "dirtied the water," as I see it, and created resistance in Dzogchen circles. Only a few other translators have used "gnosis" for *rigpa*, and I think the tide is turning toward either keeping the Tibetan word or using something like "pure presence," which many in the Dzogchen community now prefer.

7. *rigpa* as Totality Beyond Cognition

Let me be clear: *rigpa* is not cognition. Cognition is just the function of the subjective aspect of being—the "knower." But *rigpa* is the totality of being itself. It includes both the subjective and the objective in complete inseparability.

If I were doing these translations today, I'd go with "pure presence," because that captures the immediacy and wholeness of the experience—not just mental knowing, but total being-awareness.

8. The Union of Subject and Object in Non-Dual Awareness

rigpa is the total integration of subject and object—not "two in oneness," which is a Vajrayana tantric notion, but a prior unity where no division ever occurred. It's cognitive unity, yes, but not in the sense of a mind grasping an object. It's the natural condition where knower and known are one self-luminous field.

That's why using terms like "cognition" or "awareness" alone is misleading—you're only describing half the picture.

9. The Inexpressibility of *rigpa* and the Limits of Language

The truth is, *rigpa* is inexpressible. Anything I say about it is, strictly speaking, wrong. But we have to use words as pointers. "Intrinsic awareness" is one good option because it suggests that experience is self-aware—phenomena know themselves. There's no separate "I" observing "it."

This isn't intellectual—it's the nature of this very moment. But the moment you try to pin it down, you've already missed it.

10. Conditioning and the Illusion of Separation

We're deeply conditioned to see separation: self and other, inside and outside, mind and world. That dualistic habit is the screen between us and the natural state. Take away the screen—through recognition, not effort—and what's left is unitary space. Not a space "out there," but the open, boundless, self-aware totality that is *rigpa*.

11. The Origin of Duality: A Flicker of Fear

How did this dualistic universe arise? From a flicker of fear in the oneness. That subtle tremor of insecurity gave rise to the need to control—to feel we're masters of our fate. Out of that came the entire framework of cause and effect.

12. The Emergence of Causal Reality and Technology

We built this causal world to manage our fear of the "other"—the environment, other people, even our own bodies. Technology is just the outer expression of that

inner drive to dominate what we perceive as separate. And then we mistake this whole construct for reality.

But it's just a screen—a way to dim the overwhelming brightness of the clear light.

13. Non-Action and Relaxation into the Natural State

The Dzogchen path is one of non-action. We don't try to dismantle the causal world. We simply relax into the nature of mind, and the whole scheme crumbles on its own. Then we're back at the origin—back in the oneness.

14. The Spontaneous Display: Starburst of Awareness

From that oneness arises spontaneous manifestation—not as a chain of causes, but like a starburst: a single, magnificent, timeless display of sound and light. It's momentary and constant at once. And that awareness—*rigpa*—is pure presence.

15. Two Paths Arising from One Consciousness

A student asked how this fits with another Dzogchen text I've translated—the one that speaks of "two ways of consciousness looking at itself." The answer is simple: out of that germ of fear arises a split—one path of recognition, one of ignorance. It's not a split in the mind, but in awareness itself. Fear triggers the illusion of separation, and from there, two trajectories unfold.

16. Emotional Neurosis as Amplification of Division

As the sense of division grows, so do emotion and intellect. The greater the split, the more intense the fear, desire, anger, pride, and jealousy. The intellect becomes frenetic; the emotions become neurotic. All of it is the amplification of that original flicker.

17. The Ground of Being and the Illusory Nature of Saṃsāra

But here's the key insight: nothing is ever truly separate from the ground of being. That germ of fear? It arises *within* the ground. Saṃsāra itself is nothing other than the display (*rolpa*) of *rigpa*. Ignorance (*marigpa*) is enlightenment in disguise.

We're not trying to create a blueprint of reality. We're simply returning to *rigpa*—the natural state.

18. Delusion as Display: Recognizing Maya

When we see delusion as solid, we suffer. But when we recognize it as display—as light, as illusion, as a three-dimensional quantum show of sound and form—it becomes the doorway to awakening.

That's what the Buddha meant under the Bodhi tree when he said, "I know you, Māra. I know you, delusion." He wasn't fighting an enemy; he was seeing through a mirage.

19. The Doorway Back Through Neurosis

Paradoxically, the path back is *through* the neurosis—not around it. Our confusion, our fear, our very sense of separation—all are expressions of *rigpa*. Recognize them as such, and the illusion collapses.

We don't need methods. We need recognition. And that recognition is always available—in this very moment.

20. Conclusion: Knowing Delusion as the Path to Awakening

I don't know why that flicker of fear arose—and honestly, it doesn't matter. What matters is seeing that everything arising within experience is inseparable from the ground. The one who knows this is the Buddha—not a historical figure, but the resolution of all delusion into its source.

DAY 7

Precepts: View, Meditation, and Conduct as Direct Recognition

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1. The Three Precepts as Dzogchen Essence

The son of nurses—those of you who have the book—we're very lucky to have this printout, which we've done overnight, just magically, of course, of the three verses of precepts. Maybe we could distribute this later on. Yes, I need to correct it and then I will print it, or I will send it to people by mail. So the first line—it's got six lines and they're in three couplets. The first couplet refers to view, the second to meditation, the third to conduct.

2. The Nature of Multiplicity Is Non-Dual

These are the three essential precepts here, each sufficient to deconstruct—or to determine—the nature of view, meditation, and conduct respectively. The first: *the nature of multiplicity is non-dual.*

3. Unity, Duality, and Plurality as Expressions of One Ground

And here we have three things: unity, duality, and plurality. We say unity is perfect, duality is perfect, plurality is perfect—but this is only because plurality is unity, multiplicity is unity, duality is unity. Because what appears to be dual has never left the ocean of unity; it is always and only, and only can be, unity. When I say unity, I mean non-dual.

4. The Initiatory Experience of Non-Duality

Again, let's go back to Garab Dorje's first precept: the experience of non-duality in duality. That recognition is simply this: the recognition that all multiplicity is non-dual. This is the initiatory experience that is our touchstone. We can't really start with the intimation. The intimation of non-duality is what reinforces an initiatory experience, but we must have some initiatory experience to begin with.

5. The Peril of Believing in Substantial Reality

It's very useful to know what to expect as initiatory experience—or what to recognize as such—but if we never had that introduction, conceptual or otherwise, then in post-initiatory experience, we need to recognize at some point what we already have. I mean, most of us know what we've got and recognize the non-dual experience when we have it. But those who did not recognize it at the time may recognize it later on, having been introduced to it conceptually, then knowing what they should have expected.

This is not to be considered a difficult experience—difficult of access. It's always just underneath this sheen of duality and figures. So: the nature of multiplicity is non-dual. And the ramifications—which before the break I was mentioning—are so important that it's the difference between light and darkness.

If we think that multiplicity is multiplicity and each element of our universe has some substantial existence, then we are doomed. Because we are isolates—just little balls of consciousness in this universe without apparent purpose. If we are just tiny bubbles of consciousness, there's no possibility of any kind of true communication; there's no possibility of union.

6. Social Constructs as Karmic Projection

But more than that, we think that our neuroses are real—like they truly exist "out there." We believe that our paranoias are actually based on true fear, and then we're stuck in them. If there's no possibility of resolution—if I think that another person, somebody out there, is actually an embodiment of hatred—then my peace is blown forever. I can't exist like that. I cannot exist in a world surrounded by enemies.

Likewise, I can't exist in a world surrounded by objects of desire that are unattainable. I can't exist in a world of constant frustration. I can't live in a world of constant fear of division. And how do I know that? When my alienation reaches a certain threshold, I get angry—and my anger actually turns into violence. And you know what happens when the common consciousness reaches that threshold? Then you've got war.

Because society thinks that there is an actual threat out there, and it's not a projection of mind. We think that the multiplicity—and the isolates that compose the multiplicity—are substantial, and their attributes are real and indestructible. No: multiplicity is non-dual.

7. Phenomena as Inclusive, Interconnected Situations

It means that multiplicity is just a screen for all our karmic projections. It's a display—a dance of joy. Because there's nothing in non-duality that is substantial at all; it's just this gossamer clay of light. The nature of multiplicity is non-dual, and things in themselves are pure and simple. The things are the components of the non-duality of the multiplicity.

8. Pure Simplicity and the Light of the Ground

"Pure and simple" is actually the pure and simple attribute of Dharmakaya. And pure and simple is non-dual. It's cognizant light—cognizant emptiness, cognizant lucidity. All things whatsoever.

Let's talk about "things." What is a *dharma*? *Dharmakaya* is the Sanskrit term for *dharma*. That may be a more sophisticated translation: phenomena. All phenomena—yes, all things—but "phenomena" tends to be interpreted as external, objective situations. The term *dharma* includes subjective experience too. So what we're looking at here is that things are inclusive situations. We can't actually isolate a thing.

9. Why Legislation Fails in a Non-Dual World

A thing is something that we have arbitrarily—or society has arbitrarily—decided is an entity divided by a particular line and a pattern of colors. It doesn't end at its line of definition. It includes the space around it—and therefore the next thing that exists in that space. Through that analysis, we come to a phenomenon.

A phenomenon is a situation in which "I" and the environment are actually interconnected. Of course—yes—there's no difference between inside and outside. It's all a singular field. And the multiplicity is, first of all, the multiplicity of patterned objects which compose a single field—a single phenomenon. And then there's the multiplicity of phenomena in time, through time, one after the other in the flow.

All pure in its nature because it has never been separated from its original source—that is, the light of the ground being, the pure light of the ground being. For that reason, it's pure and simple. And being pure and simple, there's nothing hidden. What we've got here is upfront—nothing else at all. In your face. There are no levels; there are no hidden dimensions. You can see it all in the face. There are no hidden passages and hidden caves in the mind where spirits or genies reside.

That's why legislation is such an impossible task. In general, you have to pin down particular things existing by themselves and extract them from the context—and then you can apply judgment. If we say "society," including all the social institutions, there's a tendency for society to want to pin things down—to make it all legal or illegal, black and white, controlled. This is the dualized mind in its state of fear.

10. Institutions as Illusory Constructs of Fear

Our society tries to divide everything between the acceptable and the unacceptable, the good and the bad. This is the result of this dualistic concept that is connected to fear. It's incredible that there is—that multiplicity is taken as reality. You can call it "the establishment," if you like, as a synonym for multiplicity.

So, from the Queen, the President, the legislation, the legal and medical systems, the professional hierarchies, and the social hierarchy as defined by Marx—the whole of this establishment is complete delusion, projected by the fearful in an attempt to create something we can believe in. I think monarchies and presidential regimes come from this fear and from wanting to fix things.

The military is also non-dual. The military is simply a pigment of our imagination—an attempt by the intellect to pin down certain things as constant realities. And this is connected to myth—yes, it's part of that, of course, of everything that arises from the ground. Everything that is produced comes from there—that's why it tries to open up.

You start by saying that even the military is unity. And that was a little different—if you start from the end: all our institutions are the non-dual unity. Yet we take them very seriously, as if they were substantial entities. We're not talking about individual human beings as sentient beings; we're talking about some creation—some concept. In themselves, those institutions—and, of course, the sentient beings that animate them and give them life—are our delusion.

11. Meditation as Construct-Free Presence

That's the view. Then we go to the meditation: *being here and now is construct-free.* The long chain—the being here and now—we only know the here and now through the long chain: that space of experience in the month of the inexpressible, that space of experience beyond concepts. In that space, there are no constructs; there are no institutions.

12. The Ground of Clear Light Beyond Concepts

And human beings are a project—they are simply a ball of karmic propensities. I am a ball of karmic propensities, and you are balls of karmic propensities. We all are like that. There's no substance anywhere. And there's no soul, and there is no principle of transmigration—nowhere other. And there's no God that has some substantial essence. And there's no hierarchy of spiritual beings beyond what is projected by our intellectual imaginations.

13. Thoughts as Foam Returning to the Ocean

The whole thing is constantly moving, constantly transforming—a net of common projections and personal projections. *Mayājāla* is the term: the technical term for that net of transforming illusion. And it constitutes a very large part of the *Nyingma Gyübum*, the collection of tantras of the Nyingma school.

But in our meditation, is there nothing substantial? Is there only this illusion? It's like a matrix—*mayājāla*. Being here and now as construct-free means that, in our meditation—or our non-meditation—our meditation is defined as a state in which we can see the light, the elemental light, of all delusion. This is a state free of elaborations and delusions.

Practically speaking, when we sit down on our seat, we come out of the samsaric world of convention. Everybody assumes that the institutions, the individuals, and the whole thing are real. But what we've got are quite specific thoughts. And as we relax, we leave saṃsāra. We are only with our thoughts—but then we leave even that. We are into very specific thoughts, and the thoughts are quite easily separated.

14. The Moon-in-Water Simile: Nature of Appearance

Then, as we relax, the thoughts become increasingly non-specific. We are relaxing into the ground out of which they arise. And the ground is the clear light. And if our non-meditation is non-meditation, then the thoughts fall back into the ground—just like the foam of the waves falling back into the ocean.

And then what shines out of that ground? I mean, we are not in a state of emptiness. We are not in a state of what's it called—the *samādhi* of nothingness. No—in that ocean, realities shine like the reflection of the moon in water. There you've got the magic. Because you can't say anything about the reflection of the moon in water. It's not the moon. It's not the water. Come, hold it. Come and analyze it. Separate it out. It's a magical creation.

15. Samadhi of Reality—Free from Judgment

And that's what arises in the non-meditation—and that's the *samādhi* of reality. You see: the moon in water that has no ethical consideration. It's not good or bad—anywhere there in that reflection, in that phenomenon, in that experience. There's not only no ethical qualification—there's no analysis. There's no judgment on any level whatsoever.

And that reflection shines out in all its forms—always all good. And that's the reflection of *samādhi* of Vajra. That's the transmission of *samādhi* of Vajra. That's the definition of transmission: what is described by that simile of the reflection of the moon in water. That's the transmission of Vajra—that's the reflection of the moon in water. And all good—not good as opposed to bad, but good as essentially transcendent.

16. Transmission as Direct Reflection, Not Doctrine

Then we get up from our meditation—and it's not a matter of getting rid of that experience. It's a matter of taking the potential of that image out into saṃsāra. So "good" as essentially transcendent—not as opposed to bad. Because it's not the same as transcendence, but I think that after you... not good as opposed to bad, but essentially transcendent—not as opposed to it.

17. Integrating Non-Meditation into Ordinary Life

We take our *yab-yum*—or our awareness—out into saṃsāra, and there is unification. So out there, as in here, what we're looking at is just a magical projection without any substantiality, without any existence. You know that feeling of going out into the streets and being restricted by what society demands and what people expect? We are not free of that so long as we believe those constrictions have any kind of force.

18. Social Reality as Illusory Performance

In reality, we are working that very thin line down a very grey street—from life to death, from birth to death—with the knowledge that there's nothing there. It's just luminescence. It's just like... that social force, that body of social law—social rules, that social weight—has no consistency. It's illusion. It's illusion. We can, on the contrary, project a display of sound and light that is pure circus—just pure dance, or a multi-dimensional performance: a multi-dimensional life.

19. Conduct: “There Is Nothing to Do”

That’s the meditation—the non-meditation—taken out of the body of the meditation room and maintained in the gaps between sessions. And thus, the 24-hour day meditation.

Then the third is the śloka on conduct, which says: *there’s nothing to do. It’s already there, so there’s nothing to do.* But we have recognized the nature of mind. That was the activity—and that remains a constant. And there’s nothing else to do.

20. Recognition as the Only Activity—Spontaneous Perfection

Okay, let’s qualify that a little bit: there’s nothing that you *must* do. There’s no discipline that we must perform in order to attain this state of being. The nature of mind was there before we were born, and will be there after we pass away. It’s always there—you cannot, no way, get rid of it. It’s always already there. There’s nothing to do. It’s a pre-existent perfection. And spontaneity is inevitable in that situation.

Another way to put it: the only thing to do is the recognition of the nature of mind—which, because it is the natural state, is always trying to infuse us.

So that’s the *cuckoo's song*. That’s it—it’s finished with the blue and the red *hūṃs*. The blue *hūṃs* in the body. Cloudy blue *hūṃs* projected into the room, into the beams, and the objects in the room. Wherever they touch, they gently stroke—they pacify, they assuage. The in-breath: the in-breath back into the lungs—the whole swarm of *hūṃs*, large and small. Sky blue—scintillating sky blue.

DAY 8

The Unfolding Moment and the Peril of Spiritual Materialism

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1. The Rainbow Body and Semdzin

It's the Rainbow Body Semdzin. Semdzin is a collection of exercises brought together by Longchenpa.

2. The Function of Semdzin in Dzogchen Practice

Semdzin is a difficult word to translate—“mind-holders.” When the mind is too diffused, when it’s tired or anxious, then Semdzin serves to focus the mind, returning it to a place where a window can open back into the nature of mind.

3. A Simple Visualization: Heart-Centered Radiance

The exercise is simple enough. Again, sit comfortably, and then imagine yourself sitting inside a globe—a perfect sphere—such that your ankles touch the bottom and the crown of your head touches the top of the globe’s inner surface.

4. On the Infinite and the Finite Globe

From the heart center, visualize rays of light—colored rays, rainbow hues—emanating in a full 360-degree sphere, radiating outward in all directions.

Can you imagine those rays extending into infinite space? The only function of the globe is to define a finite point of origin. Beyond its skin, the rays extend limitlessly. That’s the only role of the globe: to mark the finite from which the infinite unfolds. Let’s do this.

5. Songs as Vehicles of the View

It’s the songs which focus the precepts on the view. Who knows—each individual requires a different input regarding the view, and each individual needs different precepts, and different numbers of precepts. In a sense, the more the better.

The *Soktik Kusum* and Padmasambhava’s commentary on the *Three Words of Garab Dorje* are seminal—the foundational texts.

6. Samantabhadra as the Speaker: Archetype and Danger

I want to go quickly through *Radical Creativity*, because a rather different set of precepts is presented here. The first thing about this song—I call it a song, a tantra—is that it is spoken by Samantabhadra, which gives it a rather different flavor.

I haven't spoken much about Samantabhadra particularly, but it is Samantabhadra who represents Dzogchen's inexpressible unity or primordial cognitive experience.

7. The Risk of Egoic Identification with Buddha Nature

You may ask: what are we doing with this Buddha representation in our radical Dzogchen? It's a valid question. It's beautiful—but do we need to justify it any further than that?

Yet it does give us an objective potential for attachment. Is it dangerous? Well, I don't know of any story in which a lama approached a Buddha image on an altar and hit it with a club to destroy it—though we're familiar with such incidents from the Zen tradition.

Even after only a few decades of exposure to Tibetan Buddhism, we must remember to destroy the Buddha image occasionally. It's a very potent object of attachment.

8. The Timeless Moment and the Paradox of Unfoldment

We know that the *tigle*—those tiny luminous spheres seen in the visual field—in the elaborate cosmologies of Dzogchen, are believed to contain Buddha forms. If you look closely enough, you can actually see them.

Now, I can see how a Tibetan, conditioned from birth, might perceive the Buddha in these tigles. But we—who've had at least eighteen years of Christian conditioning—probably can't. I'm sorry, but that's the reality.

Yes, it's an archetypal image, a universal archetype. We must understand such representations as skillful means.

9. Samantabhadra's Emanation: Apparent Yet Non-Existent

The visualization of Tara projected in the sky before us is a method of evocation—a vocation of awakened presence. And when we say, "That is Tara," yes—but surely that, too, is just a skillful means.

Like the names we're given—our Buddhist names—are those also skillful means? The Tibetan names we receive? Yes, they can be.

In the representation of Samantabhadra that we've adopted, we're going to leave it out here in the world of saṃsāra. I'm just saying: let's be a little wary when approaching this mantra where Samantabhadra is the speaker—particularly where the word "I" is used.

10. No Distinction Between Sentient Beings and Buddhas

We must approach this teaching knowing that Samantabhadra is the speaker, and that "I" refers to that primordial ground. In one sense, it serves the purpose of identification—*our real selves are Samantabhadra*.

But if there is any ego remaining—if we perceive ourselves as any kind of substantial entity at all—then we are in danger of falling into the abyss of Vajra Hell.

The danger lies in identifying our ego with the Buddha archetype. If we do that, we empower the ego and thereby manifest its delusion.

11. The Futility of Striving and the Necessity of Non-Action

Detractors of Dzogchen will point to this danger and say, "Don't just watch out—don't even go there." But I actually think it doesn't matter whether you're in Dzogchen or in Indiana—the danger is always present.

We don't even need to practice meditation to give the ego a divine charge.

Anyway, let's continue. A vital notion here is the *unfoldment of the moment*. The problem is that if we use the image of "unfoldment" to describe the nature of the moment, we imply a time frame.

12. Ambition as Obstacle to Spontaneous Creativity

The nature of reality is potential. In each timeless moment, there is an unfoldment—an emanation—of that potential. But that seems to require time. A process can only evolve in time, yet it's in the timeless moment that the heart center emanates the fully open lotus.

This is the failure of our limited, relative mind to apprehend the timeless moment. We can't really say that potential emanates in a timeless moment—yet that's exactly what happens. The thought alone throws our intellect into confusion. We're forced to resolve that paradox.

13. Spontaneous Presence vs. Crystallized Form

Every instant—every timeless moment—is a manifestation of Samantabhadra. Each instant is a transmission: a dharmic teaching.

What is the teaching? That the world—our phenomenal experience—is apparent but non-existent. You can see it, but there's nothing there. That's the nature of Samantabhadra's emanation.

Samantabhadra's emanation includes mountains, trees, landscapes, and all animate beings. It's all transmission. It's all momentary creativity.

And the "eye" that says, "I create all this," is the eye that resides in the heart center. There's no point debating whether that heart center is a physical point or the totality itself. The miracle is the emanation—the illusory projection.

I've said this before: the creator is that eye, and the creativity is the potency of that eye—the manifesting energy.

Everything whatsoever is the manifestation, the transmission of Samantabhadra. Nothing is excluded.

14. The Doha-Like Structure of Dzogchen Songs

There's no problem in Dzogchen like, "Why is God laying this bad stuff on us?" Everything arises as perfection.

Thus, any distinction between sentient beings and Buddhas is purely an aberration of the intellect. For this reason, there is nothing to do—we're already there.

Even the thought, "I am merely a sentient being and must strive toward Buddhahood," is itself a perfect thought—yet the initial understanding of the

identity between sentient beings and Buddhas is necessary *so that we don't do anything*.

But if that distinction becomes a fixed belief, we'll strive for self-improvement—and the opportunity for non-action is lost.

15. On Gender, Duality, and the Gankyil Symbol

Ambition has no place in this radically creative output. The moment ambition enters, it's messed up. Ambition implies a goal—and dissatisfaction.

In fact, ambition is counterproductive; it inhibits the creative impulse from unfolding. The spontaneity that creates is always the same—untouched by intention.

This leads us to the word *lhundrup*—often translated as "spontaneous perfection." But that phrasing suggests something is *being* created to perfection. In truth, nothing is ever created.

Everything remains in potential.

Look at your visual field: the only thing giving shape, color, and form to objects—and to this room—is the mind's propensity to crystallize and to look back at what has "been done."

But if we're truly in the present, there's only creativity itself—pure spontaneity—not the spontaneously produced forms of delusion.

Thus, we cannot say anything about the here and now; it only becomes concretized by looking back. Therefore, spontaneity is always the same.

16. Union as Reflection of Samantabhadra's Nature

These songs seem to me constructed much like the *dohas* of Mahamudra—collections of verses, each standing uniquely on its own, with little logical connection between them.

This next verse speaks of the union of duality—"two in oneness." Here, we're stepping slightly down from pure Dzogchen into tantric expression.

In Dzogchen itself, there is no gender—only the sameness of pure being. Gender is delusory; the distinction arises from karma and intellect.

The classic *Samantabhadra-Samantabhadri* image—often called *Gakyil* or *Gabyum* in the Longchen Nyingtik—expresses the absolute nature of mind. But even that

image doesn't represent the inexpressible non-dual ground; it points to a stage just before that oneness.

Thus, it's a skillful means—the union of opposites, whether physical, energetic, or mental. And importantly: those two are never truly separate.

The physical union of man and woman is not merely metaphor—it's a reflection of Samantabhadra's universal process.

Given the social taboos around sexuality, societies impose prohibitions. But here, the teaching asserts the absolute morality of union.

17. The Peril of Spiritual Materialism

This verse expresses the Anuyoga precept of "two in oneness."

The next verse—and indeed, the last three verses of this tantra—are warnings. We are warned here about *spiritual materialism*.

Spiritual materialism is a disease born of dualistic thinking, goal orientation, and the concretization of a path.

If our goal—Buddhahood—becomes something solid, substantial, and external; if the path becomes something reliable, inevitable, etched in stone—then what's the difference between that and money management?

Wealth is the goal; business schools teach techniques to acquire it. Both systems operate through rules, ethics (or lack thereof), and conduct. What's the essential difference?

18. The Illusion of Path and Goal

Put another way: what's the difference between the professional priest and the professional banker? Both have a sense of self and personal ambition. Both seek to achieve their goals in time and space.

The colors and shapes differ—but the underlying impulse is the same: selfish desire.

This is spiritual materialism. The trouble is, those selling it won't tell their students the path is redundant. The priest won't say the quest for salvation is nonsense.

If your goal lies eons ahead, what difference does it make in *this* life?

So—what distinguishes spiritual materialism from a valid path?

19. Non-Duality Cannot Be Reached by Technique

In the Dzogchen view, we gain nothing by seeking. What we gain through seeking is entirely delusory.

Buddha is discovered through non-action. In this adventure, there is no ladder above. We cannot reach the absolute by manipulating relative delusion.

Causality is a function of the mind—an imposition. Through technique, we cannot attain non-duality.

Thus, the priest who teaches ritual as a ladder—with a goal at the tunnel's end—is deceiving you. Preparation and technique have no validity.

There is no technique. The nature of mind reveals itself synchronistically when we are ready. We cannot prepare for it.

If someone claims to map a path to a non-existent goal, ask them to prove it. Non-duality abides nowhere.

If you can't locate it, how can you map a path to it? If you can't describe it, how will you know when you've arrived?

20. The Tarnished Gold: Recognizing Innate Perfection

Suchness yogi—no one going nowhere."

If we rest in that long enough, we become familiar with the place. There is no seat.

She says it's a kind of path with a kind of technique—"no one going nowhere."

But you can't say anything that doesn't immediately set itself up to be knocked down.

Finally, we have the image of tarnished gold as the Great Perfection. The tarnish isn't dirt—it's a fine oxidation on the gold's surface. You can rub it off with your fingers.

The gold appears other than gold only when tarnished. But if you know the tarnish *is also gold*, then there's never anything to do.

These warnings seem aimed at those who cling to established religion—Tantra and Vajrayana as institutions.

But my final warning: don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater. The baby—the essence—is inside.

DAY 9

Non-Action, Fearlessness, and the Ubiquity of rigpa

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1. Breathing and Open Inquiry

Let’s start this session with a few minutes of breathing.

Now, at this juncture, is there anything that everybody wants to raise? Any issues or questions?

2. Clarifying the Practice of Non-Doing

I have a question about the fire—the red one. Do you maintain the whole visualization all the time? You mean simultaneously with your ordinary sense of body?

Yes. As you're doing it, you are constantly in flames—from the moment you visualize the large Hūṃ burning in the body.

Spinal touch?

Any other issues arising from these two days of retreat?

Yes. I'm still trying to search through the texts. In one of them—I think it's in *The Flight of the Garuda*—it says: “Don’t even try to imagine or perceive phenomena as an illusion. Don’t even try to perceive phenomena as a magical display. That will take you nowhere.”

Of course, that points to non-action—to not doing anything at all. But what exactly does the text say there? I don’t have *The Flight of the Garuda* with me. Does anyone have it?

It’s in *The Flight of the Garuda,* somewhere. The line is something like: “Don’t even try to visualize phenomena as illusion—it’s artificial. Just try not to do anything.”

We need to see the context, because on the surface it sounds strange. But I think the deeper point is this: how do we distinguish real non-doing from just falling into a dull, ordinary egoic state? How do we avoid being artificial in “just being,” and instead rest in genuine, luminous awareness without slipping into sleep or apathy?

That’s my question.

3. The Role of Ritual in Dzogchen

I want to go to a new topic. I'm not going to do anything artificial here. I'm going to fall into normal apathy—the state of bewilderment with identification.

How do we really walk that razor's edge—not just "not doing" by default, but by recognition?

I'm not sure I see the problem. The meditation structure is a binding into the nature of mind—a binding within awareness. It is relaxing into the nature of awareness without any discrimination whatsoever.

You can do *Semdzin* or the *Inner Rushen* practices before that. We don't have much, but we have the Red and Blue hūṃs, the Rainbow Body *Semdzin*, and *Vajrasattva*. We have the Nine Breaths. In fact, we have a little session that starts with the Nine Breaths, followed by the refuge prayer, the generation of bodhicitta, then the Red and Blue hūṃs—and then we fall into the "doing nothing" meditation.

This is a ritual. And over these couple of days, we've said certain things about ritual. It's important, but you can't expect rituals to work mechanically or immediately. That doesn't happen.

4. The "Doing Nothing" Meditation

What this ritual does is set you up for the synchronicities of grace—at any point in the twenty-four hours—in which the intimation of the nature of mind emerges.

Don't necessarily expect immediate results from this meditation. Now, if you've been doing strong, contrived meditation of any kind, you may be surprised at the immediate effect of *doing nothing*. But if you've done no meditation—if you're not in the habit of any meditation—then you shouldn't expect some amazing insight.

Do that sitting practice for five or ten minutes. Simply sit. At the end, you can do the *Semdzin* of the Rainbow Body and sit again. Then finish with the dedication of merit.

A good Dzogchen practice—if you do any other practice, you can slot it in—adds a little bit of dye. If you don't do any regular practice, then just do five minutes of simply sitting.

5. Dissolving Artificiality in Meditation

So, in Dzogchen practice we have several tools: Dzogchen water, *Vajra Songapra*, the refuge liturgy, the *Dzogtig* liturgy, the practice of the Red and Blue hūṃs, and then the meditation of non-action.

It's a ritual that is important—but it doesn't work immediately on a mechanical level. Rather, it prepares us for the event of synchronicity—to be able to recognize the spontaneous emergence of the nature of mind.

We don't have to have expectations or wait for results. If you've practiced any kind of effortful meditation, you might be surprised by the effect of simply letting go. The recommendation is to practice for five minutes, then do the *Semdzin* of the Rainbow Body, and finish with the dedication of merit.

After the *Semdzin*, I'm not sending you off to do anything in particular—just sit and see what arises.

6. The Hūṃ Practice and Projection

It's a magical display.

What I wanted to say is this: after you sit down, the meditation is nothing. You need to have the same feeling—relaxed, open, present. If you can sit, sit. If you don't have time to sit formally, still maintain that same quality of awareness.

You can't do the full series of practices every time—but do whatever you can, every time, with the same attitude. Make simply sitting a regular practice.

But remember: meditation is an exploration. It's actually the place of questing. And you can do anything you like in that period—as long as there's an orientation toward non-action.

7. The Hūṃ as Symbol of rigpa

The visualization of the mind-holder—the Rainbow Body—goes together with any breath. Just imagine it.

Good. Any other questions?

Perhaps a word about the relationship between this *Radical Dzogchen* and the Dzogchen that most Tibetan teachers will offer you.

8. Dualistic Appearance as Creative Display

I've said that you won't find many teachers offering this Radical Dzogchen. Don't expect it. That's not part of their training. But there is no conflict.

What we do here is bring into focus what is already inherent in the graduated-path Dzogchen—after the long journey of preliminary practices, or in any *terma*-based Dzogchen. Don't make the distinction an issue. Don't say, "Why don't you teach us Atiyoga?" You *are* being taught Atiyoga—if there's any Atiyoga in the graduated path, it's right here.

There's no conflict. It's more a matter of seeing the two approaches as two sides of the same coin.

9. Radical Dzogchen vs. Graduated Path Dzogchen

And take this understanding beyond just "Radical Dzogchen" versus "elaborate Dzogchen." The same Atiyoga applies in any kind of self-improvement practice—yoga, calisthenics, Hindu disciplines, *Bhakti Yoga*, whatever. That's our culture. That's what we do in our lives.

10. Dzogchen as All-Encompassing Awareness

And Dzogchen—the essential Dzogchen awareness—infuses whatever we do. It takes on another dimension when we're watching television, eating, socializing—whatever we're doing. Dzogchen permeates it all.

Whether it's elaborate Dzogchen, New Age practice, or secular activity—**it's all Dzogchen**. All secular activities too, religious or secular. In fact, **nothing is excluded**. Absolutely nothing.

11. The Illusion of Phenomena and the Danger of Conceptualizing It

If there's nothing else… well, I have an issue with this idea of "perceiving reality as an illusion." I understand it intellectually, but it always strikes me as forced.

Related to this: I was thinking about the practice of the hūṃs—where we visualize ourselves as Hūṃ, project it outward, draw it back in, and recognize we *are* the Hūṃ. Doesn't this practice help us see that all phenomena are projections of our own mind?

Yes—it's capable of very profound interpretations, and this is certainly one of them.

12. Familiarization with rigpa Transforms Experience

You mentioned how we crystallize phenomena—how we see a color, for instance, and immediately solidify it by referencing the past, losing the fluidity of its ever-changing nature. We concretize things into identities. Is there any way this practice helps us see through that?

The answer is: **reinforcement of the recognition of rigpa**. It's rigpa that lights everything up. It's rigpa that dissolves all substance. It's rigpa that brings us back into the here and now. That is the key.

It all flows from that first recognition—the recognition of reality as it is. What we need is not "more effort," but **familiarization** with that revelation. And *that* is what turns phenomena into magical illusion, turns suffering into joyful display.

Can we do anything to increase that experience?

You're a very lucky person—you already have it. So no need to worry.

13. The Power of Fearlessness

The question I constantly return to is: how do we truly accept that all phenomena are pure illusion? In reality, it's difficult to feel that directly.

But the Hūṃ practice—projecting outward, drawing inward—does help us understand that our entire perceived world is a reflection of our own awareness. And yes, it helps profoundly.

The Hūṃ represents the nature of mind. It embodies the clarity, bliss, and awareness of rigpa. It also contains the creativity of rigpa—which appears in dualistic form. But wherever it appears, whatever appears, it has the nature of Hūṃ. The Hūṃ *is* rigpa.

We don't deny dualistic perception. But dualistic perception ceases to have any binding effect when we understand it as the spontaneous creativity of the nature of mind.

The Hūṃ is the essence of the internal Dzogchen practice—the most important tool in the Dzogchen yogi's arsenal.

14. Openness as Infinite Potential

It also helps distinguish peaceful and wrathful forms—though wrath is not "anger." It's dynamic clarity.

I want to finish with some commentary on Dilgo Khyentse's advice on “taking Dzogchen onto the path”—that is, bringing Dzogchen into everyday life.

The key here is *fearlessness*—the fearlessness of the nature of mind. In Portuguese, it’s translated as “destemor”—the courage to meet all circumstances without barrier.

Fearlessness manifests in everyday relationships—with the environment, with others, with your partner, with yourself—as **openness**.

15. Fear as the Doorway to Fearlessness

Openness doesn’t just mean absence of social barriers—it means **absence of any parameters whatsoever**. We can’t go anywhere, say anything, or do anything without it being a transmission. And that gives us vast spaciousness in which to move.

Even the minutest intention can arise and activate in that space—free from social prohibition, personal morality, or internal inhibitors.

So openness here means **potential for infinite activity**—specifically, altruistic activity. It’s like trembling at the frontier of that possibility.

Everything is possible with understanding of the nature of mind. And this must manifest in the social forum—not remain confined to meditation cushions.

16. The Nature of Mind Destroys All Barriers

Until we’re certain of the **ubiquity of rigpa**—until we’re sure that everything we do is informed by the nature of mind—we may feel a little nervous. But that very intimation gives us the impulse to continue.

With that understanding, there’s nowhere we cannot walk. And not only that: the openness doesn’t just allow us to function—it gives us **joy and playfulness** in every situation. If heaviness remains, we’re just collapsing the temple on ourselves.

This is the view that allows infinite engagement.

And if fear arises at the beginning—**look into the fear itself**. Because in the fear is rigpa. Fear is the doorway into fearlessness. And each time you do this, your confidence increases.

Remember Garab Dorje: by assuming the nature of mind is everywhere—and acting from that assumption—you gain conviction in your practice.

17. Anonymity and the Absence of Spiritual Hierarchy

What we fear is often what we feel guilty about. These are the self-made, socially-conditioned barriers that bind us. With knowledge of rigpa, we walk through them—they're illusion.

The Buddha is naked—because there's nothing to hide. There's nothing to defend. What others think is their own neurosis—you can't fix that.

We build defenses like the emperor's new clothes—but there's actually nothing there. So nothing to hide, nothing to fear.

The nature of mind has no feature, no identity—it's anonymous. Yet paradoxically, **your entire personality is the nature of mind**. It assumes innumerable masks, infinite forms—so it can never be pinned down.

This is a significant precept—it opens relationships and **dissolves the burden of "spiritual superiority."**

The Dzogchen doctrine stresses **equality, sameness, equanimity**. Any notion of spiritual hierarchy is like black magic—a subtle trap.

Yes, relatively, some people recognize rigpa more easily than others. But **saṃsāra is saṃsāra**. Don't get stuck in relative distinctions. The nature of mind is sameness itself.

18. Reinterpreting Padmasambhava's Famous Statement

But then—how do we understand Padmasambhava's famous line:
"*Though my view is as vast as the sky, my conduct must be as fine as flour*"?

I think that's another way of saying: **ascend with conduct, descend with view**. But honestly—I don't like that quotation.

It sounds like someone is trying to pull us down from the heights of non-dual vision back into karmic caution. **We won't accept that.**

Karma resolves itself—**instantly**—if awareness is sufficiently subtle, strong, and penetrating. You don't need to "be careful" if rigpa is recognized.

Don't let the vision run away with you? No—**let it run!** Trust totally in the vision. Because the vision is non-meditation—and that takes care of everything.

19. Rejecting Karmic Caution in Favor of Total Trust

The fear of karma is like Catholic damnation. Throw that fear away. This is a radical vision.

But what about consequences to others? For example, if I walk naked through the village—won't old ladies have heart attacks?

If you start calculating the effects of your actions, you'll never move. You'll be paralyzed.

Spontaneity takes care of relational dynamics perfectly. There's nothing spontaneity cannot navigate.

This precept—**fearless openness**—gives us the basis to do whatever is necessary. Obsession with karmic minutiae leads only to immobility.

20. Conclusion: Spontaneity Resolves All

Spontaneity resolves all. The nature of mind provides food, shelter, clothing—**automatically, perfectly, without effort**. The Guru provides. You need not worry.

So go forth with **total trust**—naked, fearless, playful—knowing that **rigpa is already accomplishing everything**.